LAKE ERIE COLLEGE

A GIFT IN HONOR
OF ITS SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY
AND IN MEMORY OF
LAVINIA ELIZABETH STOCKWELL DAY
WHO WAS BORN IN PAINESVILLE OHIO
8 DECEMBER 1852

L'AIGLON

L'Aiglon

A DRAMA IN SIX ACTS IN VERSE

BY EDMOND ROSTAND

TRANSLATED BY BASIL DAVENPORT

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L'AIGLON, *of which this is an authorized translation, was first produced at the Sarah-Bernhardt Theatre in Paris on March* 15, 1900. *The author dedicated the French edition:*

"To my son Maurice, and to the memory of his heroic great-grandfather Maurice, Count Gérard, Marshal of France."

This translation was prepared for the opening of The Wardman Park Theatre in Washington on November 18, 1924, *and was used by The Yale Dramatic Association at the Commencement Exercises in New Haven on July* 13, 1925.

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PERSONS OF THE PLAY

Franz, Duke of Reichstadt
Séraphin Flambeau
Prince Metternich
The Emperor Francis
Marshal Marmont
The Tailor
Baron von Gentz
The French Attaché
The Chevalier von Prokesch-Osten
Tiburce de Lorget
Count von Dietrichstein, the Duke's Tutor
Baron von Obenaus
Count de Bombelles
General Hartmann
The Doctor
Count Sedlinsky, Prefect of Police
An Officer of the Austrian Guard of Honor
Lord Cowley, the English Ambassador
Thalberg
Furstenberg
Montenegro
A Sergeant of the Duke's Regiment
Captain Foresti
An Old Peasant
Pionnet
Goubeaux
Chenonceaux
An Usher

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

MARIE-LOUISE, Duchess of PARMA
Countess CAMERATA
THÉRÈSE DE LORGET
The Archduchess
FANNY ELSSLER
SCARAMPI, the Mistress of the Robes
Princess GRAZALCOWITCH
Lady COWLEY
Ladies of the Court, and Ladies in Waiting on Marie-Louise

The Imperial Family
The Duke's Staff
The Emperor's Guardsmen: Soldiers of the Guard of Honor, Archers, Halberdiers, and others.
Masquers and Dominos: Harlequins, Punchinellos, Shepherdesses, and others.
Peasants
The Duke's Regiment

The period covered by the play includes the years from 1830 to 1832.

L'AIGLON

ACT I

GROWING WINGS

At Baden, near Vienna, in 1830.

The drawing-room of the villa occupied by Marie-Louise. A vast room, with an Empire chandelier of crystal in the middle. Light wood-work; walls frescoed in a Pompeian green; frieze of sphinxes around the ceiling.

Two doors at the left, the lower leading to Marie-Louise's bed-chamber, the upper to the apartments of the ladies in waiting. Down right, another door; above it, in a niche, an enormous over-ornamented faience stove elaborately decorated with pictures. At the back, between two other windows, a large French window, through which is seen the balustrade of a flight of steps which serves as a balcony, and leads down into the garden. A view of the park: lindens and pines in long avenues, lanterns hung from arched brackets. A glorious day in early September.

This commonplace rented villa has been filled with costly furniture. At the left, near the window, a beautiful cheval-glass of lemon-wood ornamented with bronzes; down-stage, a great mahogany table covered with papers; against the wall a lacquer étagère with books. Up right, a little Érard piano of the period, and a harp; farther down-stage, a Récamier chaise-longue beside a large round table. Armchairs and tabourets. Many vases full of flowers. On the wall, framed engravings of members of the imperial family of Austria; portraits of the Emperor Francis, of the Duke of Reichstadt as a child, etc.

At the rise of the curtain, at the back of the drawing-room, there is a group of very elegant ladies. Two of them are seated at the piano with their backs to the audience, playing a duet. Another is at the harp. They are playing at sight. Laughter and interruptions.

A footman ushers in, by the French window, a young lady of modest

bearing, accompanied by an Austrian cavalry officer, in a splendid hussar's uniform of blue and silver. The two new-comers, seeing that no one notices them, wait for a moment in a corner of the drawing-room. At this moment, the Count de Bombelles, attracted by the music, enters by the door at the right. He starts toward the piano, beating time, but sees the young lady, smiles, and goes quickly toward her.

THE LADIES

At the harpsichord, talking all at once, and laughing like mad.

She misses all the flats!—It's scandalous!
I'll take the bass.—Now, pedal!—Harp!—La, la!

BOMBELLES

Ah, it is you, Thérèse? You've come?

THÉRÈSE

Good day, Monsieur
De Bombelles.

A LADY

At the harpsichord.

Flat!

THÉRÈSE

Yes, I begin today
As reader to her majesty.

ANOTHER LADY

One, two!

THÉRÈSE

And thanks to you: I thank you.

BOMBELLES

Not at all.
You are my relative, and you are French.

THÉRÈSE

Presenting the officer to him.

Tiburce.

BOMBELLES

Ah, yes, your brother—pray sit down.

THÉRÈSE

Oh, I am so excited!

BOMBELLES

Smiling.

Really? Why?

THÉRÈSE

At seeing all that's left on earth of Him—
The Emperor!

BOMBELLES

Sitting down by her.

Indeed! Is that exciting?

TIBURCE

Our family used to hate this Bonaparte.

THÉRÈSE

I know it—but to see—

TIBURCE

A little scornfully.

His widow?

THÉRÈSE

And

Perhaps—his son?

BOMBELLES

Why, surely.

THÉRÈSE

One must have
No heart, no knowledge of them, no French blood,
And be no longer young, who does not tremble
When first he sees them! Is she beautiful?

BOMBELLES

Is who—?

THÉRÈSE

The Duchess of Parma!

BOMBELLES

Why—

THÉRÈSE

She is
Unfortunate—a great charm in a woman!

BOMBELLES

But I don't understand! You must have seen her?

THÉRÈSE

Oh, no!

TIBURCE

We've only just now been shown in.

BOMBELLES

But still, you must—

TIBURCE

And we would not disturb
Those ladies who are playing—or are laughing
An obbligato!

THÉRÈSE

I was waiting for
Her Majesty, there in the corner.

BOMBELLES

What!

But that's she, playing bass!

THÉRÈSE

Rising quickly.

The Emp—

BOMBELLES

I'll tell her.

MARIE-LOUISE

Turning round.

What, really? Where? Poor girl! Ah, yes, I know,
You told me,—it's a very touching story—
Her brother—

BOMBELLES

Son of a banished nobleman,
Remains in voluntary banishment.

TIBURCE

Joining them, carelessly.

I find the Austrian uniform becoming,
And then, too, there's the hunting, which I love.

MARIE-LOUISE

Ah, there's your precious brother, who eats up
The little you have left.

THÉRÈSE

Oh, no! He is—

MARIE-LOUISE

He's ruined you, I know, and you excuse him!
Thérèse de Lorget, you are charming—Come!

She takes her by both hands and makes her sit upon the chaise-longue.

Now, there you are among my ladies. You
Will find me, I may hope, agreeable,
But melancholy ever since—Ah me!

THÉRÈSE

I cannot tell you how I feel for you.

MARIE-LOUISE

Wiping her eyes.

A great bereavement. No one fully knew
His greatness!

THÉRÈSE

No.

MARIE-LOUISE

Turning to Bombelles.

I've just been writing them
To keep his horse!—And, since the general's death—

THÉRÈSE

The—general's?

MARIE-LOUISE

He kept that title—always.

THÉRÈSE

I understand!

MARIE-LOUISE

Well, ever since his death
I mourn him constantly.

THÉRÈSE

That title was
His greatest glory!

MARIE-LOUISE

I lost everything
When I lost General Neipperg.

THÉRÈSE

In amazement.

Neipperg?

MARIE-LOUISE

I

Came here to Baden to forget myself.
It's very pleasant, and quite near Vienna.
Oh, how I suffer! Do you know, they say
I've grown so thin that I look like the Duchess
Of Berry. So I do my hair like hers.
Ah, why can I not die!—This little villa
Is rather pretty! Metternich is here
Until this evening, staying with us. We
Have some amusement—Thalberg, the pianist;
And Montenegro sings in Spanish, or
Fontana screams a bit of Figaro;
Then there are drives, and visitors—but nothing
Brings me the smallest comfort—Poor dear Neipperg!
You're coming to the ball this evening?

THÉRÈSE

Looking at her in growing amazement.

I—

MARIE-LOUISE

The Meyendorffs, you know. Strauss will be there.
You must come—mustn't she, Bombelles?

THÉRÈSE

May I

Inquire, your majesty, about the Duke
Of Reichstadt?

MARIE-LOUISE

Oh, his health is good. He coughs
A little—but this air will do him good!
To think, my dear, he's a lieutenant-colonel,
And only just beginning his career.
But, if you will believe it, I have never
Yet seen him in his uniform!

Enter two gentlemen carrying boxes.

Oh, these
Are for him!

THE DOCTOR

Bowing.

Yes; we've brought them.

MARIE-LOUISE

Put them there.

BOMBELLES

What are they?

MARIE-LOUISE

Butterflies.

THÉRÈSE

Butterflies?

MARIE-LOUISE

When
I went to see this doctor about the waters
I noticed this collection that his son
Had made. I said, "If only my son took
An interest in butterflies! But nothing,
It seems, can interest him!"

THE DOCTOR

So then I said
To her majesty the duchess, "Well, why not?
He might—you never know. Let's try it!" So
I've brought our butterflies.

THÉRÈSE

To herself.

Their butterflies!

MARIE-LOUISE

Oh, if he should forget his melancholy
In looking at your—

THE DOCTOR

Lepidoptera.

MARIE-LOUISE

Leave them, and come back later. He's gone out.

The doctor and his son go out. To Thérèse.

Come, let me introduce you to Scarampi.
She is the Mistress of the Robes, you know.

Perceiving Metternich, who comes in right.

Ah, Metternich! We're waiting for you, prince.

METTERNICH

I had to come here, to receive—

MARIE-LOUISE

I know.

METTERNICH

—Councillor Gentz, the French ambassador,
And General Belliard's envoy, and a few
Of my own messengers.

To a footman for whom he has rung.

Show Councillor
Gentz in—You will allow me?

MARIE-LOUISE

Certainly!

She goes out with Thérèse. Gentz comes in—an old roué, with his pockets full of scent-bottles and candy-boxes. He is always smelling or eating something.

METTERNICH

Good morning, Gentz.

He sits down, and while he talks signs the papers Gentz has brought.

You know I leave tonight?
The emperor has recalled me to Vienna.

GENTZ

Indeed!

METTERNICH

And what a bore! Vienna now,
This time of year!

GENTZ

As empty as my pockets.

METTERNICH

Oh, surely that's not true. Come, no offense,
But Russia must have—

He lets imaginary coins slip from his fingers.

GENTZ

In comic indignation.

Sir!

METTERNICH

Oh, tell the truth!
You've sold yourself again?

GENTZ

Very calmly eating a bonbon.

To the highest bidder.

METTERNICH

But what do you do with all that money?

GENTZ

Oh,
Pleasure—and vice.

METTERNICH

And people think that you
Are my right hand!

GENTZ

Well, let your left hand not
Know what your right hand doeth.

METTERNICH

Seeing the little flasks and boxes.

Chocolates
And perfumes! Faugh!

GENTZ

Of course. I dote on sweets,
And I have pocket-money. I'm an old
Spoiled child.

METTERNICH

Shrugging his shoulders.

Another pose! This time, the pose
Of self-disparagement. And Fanny?

GENTZ

Elssler?
Does not love me. Oh, that's another joke!

She's mad about the duke. I am—their screen.
But I console myself by thinking that
It's better for the state the duke should be
Absorbed. I play the doting fool, and take
Our pretty dancer back and forth. Tonight
I am to bring her here to visit him.

METTERNICH

Still signing the papers.

You shock me, Gentz!

GENTZ

Mama will not be here—

The ball, you know.

He takes a letter from his portfolio.

Read that! From Fouché's son.

METTERNICH

Reads.

"The twentieth of August, eighteen thirty."

GENTZ

He wants to make—

METTERNICH

The good Viscount d'Otranto!

GENTZ

The Duke Napoleon the Second.

METTERNICH

Running through the letter.

Names

Of sympathizers!

GENTZ

Yes.

METTERNICH

Giving him back the letter.

Remember them.

GENTZ

Do we refuse?

METTERNICH

Yes—not too finally!
We leave some hope. That's how I govern France;
I use my little colonel, in our game
Of chess. For if they lean too much to the left,
Toward liberty, I move my colonel! Then,
When they lean back to the right, why, I withdraw
My little colonel.

GENTZ

In amusement.

When do you expect
To play him?

METTERNICH

Now!

He rings; a footman appears.

Show in the attaché
From General Belliard.

The footman shows in a French officer in dress uniform.

Good morning. Here
Are your papers. Now, so far we recognize
King Louis-Philippe. But, if he seem too little
A king, and too much—a First Consul, say,
Then we might break an egg—an eagle's egg.

THE ATTACHÉ

Nervously.

You mean Prince François-Charles?

METTERNICH

You mean the Duke
Of Reichstadt? I do not admit his father
Has ever reigned.

THE ATTACHÉ

With an ironic generosity.

Indeed? Well, *I* admit it.

METTERNICH

So, we do nothing for the duke. But—but—

THE ATTACHÉ

Well?

METTERNICH

But if you return to liberty,
Equality, fraternity, too much;
If you allow the slightest propaganda;
If your white flag shows too much red and blue;
If France becomes too free, too equal, too
Fraternal, if your royalty grow too
Republican, we *might* (you know our temper
Is not too sweet)—we *might* remember then
That Franz is our dear grandson, after all.

THE ATTACHÉ

Oh, France will never let her lilies turn
To revolutionary flags.

METTERNICH

Her lilies
If they remain white lilies, may forget
The imperial bee.

THE ATTACHÉ

Dropping his voice.

We fear the duke may—hope
In spite of you.

METTERNICH

Oh, no!

THE ATTACHÉ

But still—the news?

METTERNICH

Comes through me. Nothing there to make him hopeful.

THE ATTACHÉ

But he must know that France has changed her king?

METTERNICH

Oh, he knows that! But what he doesn't know
Is that they have restored the tricolor.
Now, that might—

THE ATTACHÉ

Yes, I see. That easily might
Intoxicate him.

METTERNICH

Oh, the duke is never
Intoxicated!

THE ATTACHÉ

Anxiously.

Here, I see, the guard
Is not so strict.

METTERNICH

Oh, here he's safe enough:
He's with his mother.

THE ATTACHÉ

What?

METTERNICH

Why, who else has
More interest in guarding him? A plot
Would interrupt her very pleasant life.

THE ATTACHÉ

But that may be a blind! She cannot have
A thought for anything except her son,
The eaglet!

Marie-Louise, entering in a whirlwind, followed by her ladies, with a cry of despair.

Oh, my parrot!

THE ATTACHÉ

Eh?

MARIE-LOUISE

To Metternich.

Oh, prince!
Margharitina! She has flown away!

METTERNICH

Oh, dear!

MARIE-LOUISE

Margharitina!

She goes out onto the balcony; the ladies scatter through the park in search of the bird.

METTERNICH

Coldly, to the attaché, who is looking on in stupefied amazement.

There!

THE ATTACHÉ

Going to Marie-Louise.

Can I
Assist your highness?

MARIE-LOUISE

Stops, looks him up and down for a moment, and, drily.

No.

She goes back to her apartments, after withering him with a look.

THE ATTACHÉ

More and more amazed, to Metternich.

But what's the matter?

METTERNICH

Repressing a smile.

She is "Your majesty"; you said "Your highness."

THE ATTACHÉ

But if the emperor never reigned, the duchess
Cannot be called "Your majesty"!

METTERNICH

She is.

THE ATTACHÉ

But why was she so angry with me?

METTERNICH

Ah,
That is a diplomatic question!

THE ATTACHÉ

After bowing to take leave.

May
The embassy now wear the tricolor?

METTERNICH

With a sigh.

Oh, yes, of course. We have agreed—

Without a word the attaché takes the white cockade from his hat, throws it down, and replaces it by a tricolor cockade which he takes from his pocket. Metternich rises, saying

That's right.

Don't lose a moment.

Noise of carriages.

What's that?

GENTZ

From the balcony.

The archduchess,
The Meyendorffs, Lord Cowley, Montenegro—
Oh, everybody!

BOMBELLES

Who at the noise has come in quickly from the left, followed by Tiburce.

Here they are!

A crowd of elegant ladies and gentlemen, dressed as for a watering-place, appears upon the steps. Light-colored frocks, parasols and large hats. The archduchess, Lord and Lady Cowley, Thalberg, Sandor, Montenegro, and others. A little archduke five or six years old, in a hussar's uniform; two little archduchesses, in the extraordinary dresses of little girls of the period. Tumult of voices and laughter; whirlwind of ribbons and ruffles.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

To Bombelles, Metternich, Gentz, and Tiburce, who advance ceremoniously to receive her.

Oh, no!
This is a villa, this is not the court!
No ceremony!—Thalberg, play for us!

My tarantella!

Thalberg goes to the piano and plays.

Where's her majesty
My sister-in-law?

A LADY

We've come to get her!

ANOTHER LADY

We
Are going for a drive across the valley.
Sandor's our guide.

A MAN'S VOICE

We are in danger, now,
Of an eruption.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Oh, be quiet! They've
Been talking all the way of some volcano.

BOMBELLES

Of what volcano?

A LADY

To another.

—Astrakhan, this winter.

SANDOR

Answering Bombelles.

Liberalism!

BOMBELLES

Ah?

LORD COWLEY

Or rather, France!

METTERNICH

Severely, to the French attaché.

You hear that?

A LADY

Leading a young man toward the harpsichord.

Now, your love-song, Montenegro;
Sing in a whisper, just to me!

MONTENEGRO

Accompanied by Thalberg.

Corazon—!

He goes on singing under his breath.

ANOTHER LADY

Good morning, Gentz. Some chocolates for you!

GENTZ

You are a love.

ANOTHER LADY

Giving him a little bottle.

Perfume from Paris!

METTERNICH

Quickly, to Gentz.

Tear
The label off! "The Duke of Reichstadt's water!"

GENTZ

Sniffing it.

It smells of violets.

METTERNICH

Scratching off the label with a pair of scissors from the table.

If the duke should see
That label, he might see that France—

A VOICE

From the group of men at back.

Is raising
Her head again!

LADY COWLEY

The gentlemen are talking
About a hydra!

LORD COWLEY

We must strangle it
Or die.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Oh, strangle your volcano, quench
Your hydra!

A LADY OF HONOR

Entering, followed by a servant with a tray.

Eis-Kaffee?

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Recite a piece
Of poetry for us, Olga.

GENTZ

Ask her for
A bit of Heinrich Heine.

ALL THE LADIES

Yes! Oh, yes!

OLGA

Rising to recite.

What? *The Two Grenadiers?*

METTERNICH

Oh, no! Not that!

SCARAMPI

Coming out of Marie-Louise's apartments.

Her majesty is coming in a moment.

SEVERAL VOICES

Scarampi!

Greetings, conversation, and laughter.

SANDOR'S VOICE

At the back.

Then to the Krainerhütte, where
The ladies can amuse themselves awhile.

METTERNICH

What are you reading in your corner, Gentz?

GENTZ

The news.

LORD COWLEY

Carelessly.

Political?

GENTZ

Dramatic.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

What

A waste of time!

GENTZ

Do you know what they are playing
At the Vaudeville?

METTERNICH

No.

GENTZ

Bonaparte.

METTERNICH
Carelessly.
Indeed?

GENTZ
At the Nouveautés?

METTERNICH
No.

GENTZ
Bonaparte. And at
The Variétés? *Napoleon.* And at
The Luxembourg? *Fourteen Years of his Life.*
The Gymnase is reviving *The Return*
From Russia. And the Gaîté promises
Two plays: *Napoleon's Coachman—Malmaison.*
A young man has just finished: *Saint Helena.*
The Porte Saint-Martin's planning to produce
Napoleon.

LORD COWLEY
A fashion!

TIBURCE
Oh, a fad.

GENTZ
At the Ambigu, *Murat;* and at the Cirque
The Emperor.

SANDOR
A fashion.

BOMBELLES
A fashion.

GENTZ

But
A fashion that recurs in France.

A LADY
Reading over Gentz's shoulder.

They want
To bring his ashes back.

METTERNICH

The phœnix can
Arise from them,—but not the eagle!

TIBURCE

What
A riddle is France's future!

METTERNICH

No, young man.
I know it.

A LADY

Tell us, prophet!

THE ARCHDUCHESS
Pretending to cense him.

His decrees
Are writ in brass!

GENTZ

At least in tin.

LORD COWLEY

Who'll be
The saviour of France?

METTERNICH

The next king—any king,
But not an emperor. That is—fashion.

THÉRÈSE

Sweetly, from her corner.

It's
Sometimes convenient to call glory fashion.

METTERNICH

Pouring himself a glass of champagne.

No matter how they used to cheer him, now
You'll never hear—

A GREAT CRY OUTSIDE

Long live Napoleon!

Everyone rises, panic-stricken. Lord Cowley chokes on his iced coffee. The women run in all directions. Everyone is ready to run.

ALL

What! Here? At Baden? What!

METTERNICH

Ridiculous!
Don't be afraid!

LORD COWLEY

We mustn't lose our heads
At a name some fool has shouted!

GENTZ

Gravely.

He is dead!

They collect themselves.

TIBURCE

Coming down from the balcony.

It's nothing!

METTERNICH

But what was it?

TIBURCE

Why, a soldier,
An Austrian—

METTERNICH

An Austrian?

TIBURCE

Yes, two.
I saw them. I was there.

METTERNICH

Regrettable!

MARIE-LOUISE

Appearing, very pale.

Did you hear that! Oh, how it frightened me!
It takes me back—they crowded round my carriage
One day—at Parma—

She sinks upon a chaise-longue.

shouting that! I have
No peace in life!

METTERNICH

To Tiburce.

But just what happened?

TIBURCE

Why,
Two soldiers of his highness' regiment,
On a furlough home, were strolling by, and saw
The Duke of Reichstadt coming back. You know
That deep ditch by the highway? Well, the duke
Wanted to jump it, but his horse refused;
It plunged and kicked, and shied away. Then he
Well, pulled it back, and over. So, for that
They cheered him; that was all.

METTERNICH

Send one of them
To me at once.

Tiburce signals from the balcony.

MARIE-LOUISE

Sniffing at some salts.

They want to kill me!

A sergeant of the duke's regiment is brought in.

METTERNICH

So,
A sergeant. Well, why did you give that cheer
Just now?

THE SERGEANT

I don't know.

METTERNICH

You don't know?

THE SERGEANT

No more
Does the corporal—something got hold of us—
He looked so young and slim on that great horse!

And then, of course, we're proud to have our colonel
The son of—

METTERNICH

Never mind!

THE SERGEANT

How easy he
Jumped over it! And looked like—like Saint George.
It made your throat swell up and made you shout
"Long live—"

METTERNICH

All right! All right! Now listen, fool.
"Long live the Duke of Reichstadt." Is that harder
To shout?

THE SERGEANT

It's not as easy.

METTERNICH

Eh?

THE SERGEANT

"Long live
The Duke of Reichstadt!" It don't go as well
As "Long live—"

METTERNICH

Pushing him toward the door.

Oh, all right! Get out! Don't cheer
At all!

TIBURCE

As the soldier passes him.

You idiot!

MARIE-LOUISE

I'm better, thanks.

THÉRÈSE

Looking at her sadly.

The Empress!

MARIE-LOUISE

Presenting Dietrichstein, who has just come in, to Thérèse.

Count von Dietrichstein—my reader.
The tutor of the duke. But, I was thinking—
Do you read well?

TIBURCE

Oh, very!

THÉRÈSE

Modestly.

I don't know.

MARIE-LOUISE

Take one of Franz's books from the lacquer table
And read a bit at random.

THÉRÈSE

Taking a book.

Andromaque.

Reading.

"And what then is this fear that fills their hearts,
My lord? What Trojan hath escaped their sword?"
"Their hate for Hector is not dead, they fear
His son."

The listeners look at each other.

"A worthy object of their fear!

A pitiful, helpless child, who knows not yet
That he is Pyrrhus' slave and Hector's son."

General embarrassment.

ALL

Murmuring.

H'm—

GENTZ

Lovely voice!

MARIE-LOUISE

Er—try another page.

THÉRÈSE

Opening the book at another place.

"Ah, I remember, on the fatal day
His courage sent him forth to seek Achilles,
He asked me for our son,

The listeners move uneasily.

and took him in
His arms. 'Dear wife,' he said, and dried my tears,
'The gods alone know what this day shall bring;
I leave to thee my son—' "

General embarrassment.

EVERYBODY

H'm—yes.

MARIE-LOUISE

Let's take
Another—try—

THÉRÈSE

Taking another book from the table.

The *Meditations*.

MARIE-LOUISE

Ah,
I know the author! This will be more cheerful.
He's dined with us.

To Scarampi, rapturously.

It's Lamartine, you know!

THÉRÈSE

Reading.

"The sweet seraphic choirs had never charmed
The heavens with more celestial harmony:
Take heart, O son torn from thy godlike sire—"

The duke appears in the French window. Thérèse, feeling that someone has come in, looks up, sees the duke standing pale and motionless in the doorway, and rises in confusion. At her movement, everyone turns and rises.

THE DUKE

I beg your pardon, mother, and Lamartine's.

MARIE-LOUISE

A pleasant ride, Franz?

THE DUKE

Coming down. He is in riding dress, a riding crop in his hand, a flower in his buttonhole, very pale, very elegant, and never smiles.

Charming. Very mild
Today.—Where were you reading, madamoiselle?

THÉRÈSE

Hesitates a moment to repeat the line; then, looking at the duke with deep emotion.

"Take heart, O son torn from thy godlike sire;
Thy glorious birth is written on thy brow;
All men who see thee—"

MARIE-LOUISE

Drily, rising.

Thank you. That's enough.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

To the children.

Go say good morning to your cousin.

The children go to the duke, who has taken a seat.
Two of them climb upon his knees.

SCARAMPI

Angrily, to Thérèse.

Shame!

THÉRÈSE

But why?

A LADY

Looking at the duke.

How pale he is!

ANOTHER LADY

He scarcely seems
Alive.

SCARAMPI

What passages you chose!

THÉRÈSE

The book
Opened itself—I never meant—

GENTZ

Overhearing.

A book
Opens itself where it is read the most.

THÉRÈSE

Aside, looking sadly at the duke.

Archdukes upon his knees!

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Leaning over the back of the duke's chair.

I am glad to see you.
I am your friend, you know.

THE DUKE

Kissing her hand.

Yes, *you* are, aunt.

GENTZ

To Thérèse.

What do you think of him? A cherub, who's
Been reading Byron secretly?

THE LITTLE GIRL

On the duke's knees.

Your stocks
Are always beautiful!

THE DUKE

Bowing.

Your highness is
Too good.

THÉRÈSE

Aside, with a sad smile.

His stocks!

A LITTLE BOY

Waving the duke's crop.

Nobody has such sticks!

THE DUKE

Gravely.

No, nobody.

THÉRÈSE

His sticks!

THE OTHER LITTLE BOY

Oh, and your gloves!

THE DUKE

My gloves are splendid, are they not?

THE LITTLE GIRL

What is
Your waistcoat made of?

THE DUKE

Pondicherry.

THÉRÈSE

Choking a sudden sob.

Oh!

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Playing with the duke's rose.

You wear your flower in the latest fashion.

THE DUKE

With forced frivolity.

Yes, the third buttonhole, you see.

Thérèse bursts into tears.

THE LADIES

Surrounding her.

Why! What's
The matter?

THÉRÈSE

I don't know—I'm sorry—it's
Silly of me, but I—away from home—
The first time—

MARIE-LOUISE

With clamorous sympathy.

Oh, poor dear! Poor dear!

THÉRÈSE

I tried
So hard to keep from crying—

MARIE-LOUISE

Kissing her.

Never mind.

THE DUKE

Who has taken a few steps without seeming to notice Thérèse's tears.

What am I stepping on? A white cockade!

He picks it up.

METTERNICH

Coming forward.

Er—

THE DUKE

Looks around a moment and, seeing French attaché.

Is this yours, monsieur? Your hat?

The attaché shows his hat, with the tricolor cockade.

Indeed?

To Metternich.

I didn't know. But, then—the flag—?

METTERNICH

Your highness—

THE DUKE

Is that the tricolor as well?

METTERNICH

Er—yes.

A thing of no importance—

THE DUKE

None.

METTERNICH

A matter

Of colors—

THE DUKE

Oh, of shades.

He takes the attaché's hat, lays the two cockades against it, and compares them, at arm's length, with his head on one side.

I think—you must

Agree with me?—that it's decidedly—

He shows the tricolor.

This one that's more becoming.

He carelessly throws down the white cockade and moves away. His mother takes his arm and leads him to the boxes of butterflies, which the doctor, who has come in a moment before, has arranged on the large table.

Butterflies?

MARIE-LOUISE

Do you like the black one?

THE DUKE

It is pretty.

THE DOCTOR

That
Is found among the umbellifera.

THE DUKE

He's staring at me with his wings.

THE DOCTOR

Those eyes?
We call those lunules.

THE DUKE

Do you? Very well.

THE DOCTOR

Are you looking at the blue and orange?

THE DUKE

No.

THE DOCTOR

What are you looking at?

THE DUKE

The pin that kills him.

THE DOCTOR

To Marie-Louise.

No interest in anything!

MARIE-LOUISE

To Scarampi.

But wait—
I'm counting—

SCARAMPI

Mysteriously.

Yes, on our surprise.

GENTZ

Offering the duke one of his little boxes.

A piece
Of candy?

THE DUKE

Taking one and tasting it.

Exquisite! It tastes at once
Of pear and vervain, and of—let me see—

GENTZ

No, never mind. It isn't worth the trouble.

THE DUKE

Trouble of what?

GENTZ

Pretending that you care.
I see with better eyes than Metternich.
—A chocolate?

THE DUKE

Haughtily.

What do you see?

GENTZ

Some one
That suffers, who might take instead the sweets
Of a young prince's life. Your soul is still
Awake, although they try to sing it to sleep
With music, and to stifle it with love.
I had a soul, once, too, but—pfft! and I
Grow older, dabbling daintily in mire,
Till one of those mad young republicans,
Avenging liberty on me, kills me,
Among my chocolates, among my perfumes,
And in my mud. I really am afraid

—A candied grape?—of being killed, some day,
By one of them.

THE DUKE

Calmly, taking a grape.

You will be.

GENTZ

What!

THE DUKE

You will
Be killed by a young man.

GENTZ

But—

THE DUKE

Whom you know.

GENTZ

Your highness is—

THE DUKE

His name is Friedrich: he's
The young man you were once. His ghost will speak
To you, and he will have no mercy.

GENTZ

It
Is true my youth can twist a dagger in me.
—But I was right, at least: this is a prince
Who dreams of empire.

THE DUKE

Sir, I don't know what
You mean.

He moves away. Metternich joins Gentz.

METTERNICH

I saw you talking—

GENTZ

Yes.

METTERNICH

He is
Very agreeable, isn't he?

GENTZ

Oh, very.

METTERNICH

I have him altogether in my hands.

GENTZ

Oh, altogether.

The duke has gone over to Thérèse, who is sitting in a corner, turning over the pages of a book. He looks at her a moment, then in a low voice.

Why did you cry?

THÉRÈSE

Rising in confusion.

I—

THE DUKE

No.

THÉRÈSE

Your highness!

THE DUKE

I know why. Don't cry for that.

He moves away quickly, and finds himself before Metternich.

METTERNICH

I'll take my leave now, duke.

The duke bows slightly, and goes to a table where Marie-Louise and Dietrichstein are looking at some papers. Metternich goes out, followed by the French attaché.

THE DUKE

You're looking at
My exercise?

DIETRICHSTEIN

Yes, it's well written, but
You make mistakes in German wilfully.
It's simply mischief!

MARIE-LOUISE

Franz, still mischievous
At your age!

THE DUKE

I can't help it; I am not
An eagle.

DIETRICHSTEIN

Here, you make *France* feminine.

THE DUKE

I never know if it's *der, die,* or *das!*

DIETRICHSTEIN

The neuter is correct.

THE DUKE

But cowardly.
I do not like to think of France as neuter.

MARIE-LOUISE

Stopping Thalberg, who is playing the piano.

My son hates music.

THE DUKE

Yes, I hate it.

LORD COWLEY

Coming up.

Highness—

DIETRICHSTEIN

Aside to the duke.

Pray be agreeable.

THE DUKE

Eh?

DIETRICHSTEIN

As before.

He's the English
Ambassador.

LORD COWLEY

When you came back just now,
Where had you galloped from?

THE DUKE

From Saint Helena.

LORD COWLEY

I beg your pardon?

THE DUKE

It's a healthy place,
And lovely in the evening. I hope
To see you there.

He bows and moves away.

GENTZ

Quickly.

This Saint Helena is
The principal village of Helenenthal,
The valley that we're in, you know.

LORD COWLEY

Indeed?
I almost thought he meant to cast a pebble
At our glass house.

GENTZ

A pebble—Saint Helena?
It is a rock.

Voices at the back.

We're going!

THE ARCHDUCHESS

To Marie-Louise.

Are you coming,
Louise?

MARIE-LOUISE

Oh, no.

Voices at the back.

The carriages!

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Well, Franz,
Will you come?

MARIE-LOUISE

No, he has no eye for nature;
He gallops even through Helenenthal!

THE DUKE

Nodding gloomily.

I gallop.

MARIE-LOUISE

Ah, you have no sentiment.

Tumult of leave-taking.

MONTENEGRO

From the steps.

I know a place where the cider is—

CRIES FROM OUTSIDE

Good-bye!

Good-bye!

GENTZ

From the balcony.

Good-bye! Don't talk about the hydra!

Peals of laughter. The sound of the carriages leaving.

THÉRÈSE

Good-bye, Tiburce.

TIBURCE

Kissing her on the forehead.

Good-bye.

He bows to Marie-Louise, and goes out with Bombelles.

MARIE-LOUISE

To her ladies.

Now take her to

Her rooms.

The ladies take Thérèse out. The duke sits down, idly glancing over the books on a table. Marie-Louise smiles and signals to Scarampi, who has stayed behind, then goes toward the duke.

MARIE-LOUISE

Franz!

He turns.

I have something that will please you!

THE DUKE

Indeed?

Scarampi carefully closes the doors.

MARIE-LOUISE

Hush! I have laid a plot—

THE DUKE

Whose eyes light up.

You've laid

A plot?

MARIE-LOUISE

A huge plot. Sh! They cut us off
From everything that comes from France, you know;
But I've sent secretly, and brought you—sh!—
One of the greatest tailors, and for us

She gives him a little tap on the cheek.

—Come, darling, smile!—for us, a dressmaker!
There! Isn't my idea—

THE DUKE

Icily.

Marvellous.

SCARAMPI

Going and opening the door of Marie-Louise's apartments.

Come in!

Enter a girl, elegant with the elegance of a dressmaker's model, carrying great hat-boxes and dress-boxes, and a young man dressed like a fashion-plate of 1830, his arms loaded with folded garments and boxes. The tailor comes down to the duke, while at the back the dressmaker lays out the gowns upon a sofa. After a deep bow, he kneels and begins quickly opening the boxes, undoing the parcels, puffing out the cravats, and unfolding the clothes.

THE TAILOR

If monseigneur will deign to look—
I have some charming novelties. In Paris,
The gentlemen all rely on me; I guide
Their taste. First, the cravats.—A serious
Maroon.—A languid violet.—Foulards
Are being worn this season.—I am glad
To see his highness has to such perfection
The art of tying a cravat.—A scarf
Of figured weave.—
Ah, yes, his highness' knot
Is perfect, noble.—How does monseigneur
Find this embroidered waistcoat?

THE DUKE

Impassively.

Very ugly.

THE TAILOR

Good. But can these too leave his highness marble?
This, goat's-hair-cloth. This we call silver birch.
Midnight-green redingote; cuffs very tight;
Highly aristocratic, is it not?
Six-buttoned waistcoat; the three upper buttons
Worn undone, with *dégagé* elegance.
Is not this little edging very clever?
A frock-coat, with the newness carefully
Rubbed off; blue, worn with Scotch plaid pantaloons,
It's—ah, what shall I say?—quite *garde-française.*
Pass by this heavy yellow braided coat
(Can Hamlet put on Falstaff's doublet?) and
Pass to the cloaks. A half-cape style, of plaid;
With demi-collar, sleeves worn well thrown back.
Eccentric for your taste? Good.—The Roulière

Model; it has a something Spanish to it;
The thing to wear to court some Dona Sol.

He throws it over his shoulders and strides back and forth.

A small neck-chain of silver, sable collar;
Exquisite work; made in our ateliers
Upon the Boulevard Montmartre. Simple
But what a cut! And cut is everything!

MARIE-LOUISE

Seeing the duke paler, with eyes fixed as if he heard nothing.

You're wearying the duke with all your talk.

THE DUKE

Rousing himself.

No, I was dreaming—for my Viennese
Tailor has no such vivid, novel words.
All that—all those amusing adjectives,
Which you think only vulgar talk—all that
—It makes me—takes me—

His eyes fill with tears.

Nothing—never mind.

MARIE-LOUISE

Going up to Scarampi and the dressmaker.

Let's see our frocks—with leg of mutton sleeves?

THE DRESSMAKER

Oh, always.

THE TAILOR

Samples: cashmere—tweed—marengo—

THE DUKE

Marengo?

THE TAILOR

It's a kind of woolen stuff;
It's very lasting.

THE DUKE

I agree with you;
Marengo will endure.

THE TAILOR

What shall we send you?

THE DUKE

I don't need anything.

THE TAILOR

One always needs
A handsome coat.

THE DUKE

Well, I should like to order—

THE TAILOR

According to your own design? Proceed,
Speak but your thought, we will embody it.
That is our secret. That is how we dress,
In Paris, Monsieur Théophile Gautier.

THE DUKE

Now, let me see.

THE DRESSMAKER

At back, exhibiting enormous hats, which Marie-Louise tries on before the cheval-glass.

Rice-straw, with muslin. It's
Not every one could carry off that hat.

THE DUKE

Could you make me—

THE TAILOR

Anything!

THE DUKE

—A—

THE TAILOR

Anything

Your highness likes!

THE DUKE

—A coat—

THE TAILOR

Oh, certainly!

THE DUKE

—Of what? Of a single material,—quite simple.

THE TAILOR

I see.

THE DUKE

And for the color—what do you think
Of—green?

THE TAILOR

An excellent idea.

THE DUKE

Green,
And showing, perhaps, the waistcoat—

THE TAILOR

Taking notes.

Very open.

THE DUKE

Then, for a touch of color in the skirt,
Suppose we have the coat-tails bordered with
—Scarlet?

THE TAILOR

In momentary astonishment.

Scar—?—Beautiful.

THE DUKE

And then the waistcoat.
What would you have the waistcoat?

THE TAILOR

It should be—

THE DUKE

It shall be white.

THE TAILOR

What taste his highness has!

THE DUKE

And then, I think—knee-breeches.

THE TAILOR

Ah?

THE DUKE

Yes.

THE TAILOR

And
The color?

THE DUKE

As I see it, they are white
As well, of silky cashmere.

THE TAILOR

Yes, indeed.
Pure white is always charming.

THE DUKE

Buttons, carved—

THE TAILOR

Carved buttons? They are never worn!

THE DUKE

Oh, yes.
Carved with—a trifling matter—little eagles.

THE TAILOR

Suddenly seeing what the simple green coat is that the duke is ordering, and trembling.

With little—

THE DUKE

Sharply, changing his tone.

Well! And what is there in that
To frighten you? Why are you trembling, tailor?
What is there strange about that coat? Why don't
You go on boasting you can make it for me?

THE DRESSMAKER

A hat for driving, trimmed with poppies.

THE DUKE

Rising.

Then
Take back your ugly samples, tailor, and
Pack up your charming novelties again.
That little coat is the only one I want.

THE TAILOR

Coming nearer.

But—

THE DUKE

Never mind! Go now, and do not talk.

THE TAILOR

But I—

THE DUKE

With a melancholy gesture.

Besides, it wouldn't suit me.

THE TAILOR

Abruptly losing his haberdasher's manner.

It

Would suit you.

THE DUKE

Turning haughtily.

I beg pardon?

THE TAILOR

Calmly.

It would suit

You very well.

THE DUKE

I admire your impudence.

THE TAILOR

Bowing.

I have full powers to undertake the order.

THE DUKE

Ah?

Silence. They look each other in the eye.

THE TAILOR

Yes.

THE DRESSMAKER

A Chinese cloak, cut full; the sleeves
Are elephant-ear; the lining is embroidered.

THE DUKE

A little ironically.

Indeed?

THE TAILOR

Yes.

THE DUKE

So, the tailor is conspiring.
Then I don't wonder at your knowing Shakespeare.

THE TAILOR

Quickly and in an undertone.

The redingote has names beneath its cape.
Deputies—noblemen—a peer—a marshal.

THE DRESSMAKER

A muslin spencer with a satin skirt.

THE TAILOR

We can help your escape.

THE DUKE

Let me decide.
Before I go I must consult my friend
The Prince von Metternich.

THE TAILOR

You will mistrust
Us less, your highness, when you know it is
A cousin of yours—

THE DUKE

Who?

THE TAILOR

Countess Camerata,
The daughter—

THE DUKE

Yes, I know. Elisa's daughter.

THE TAILOR

Yes, that is she—the Amazon who bears
Proudly her birth upon her brow, who loves
To stand out from all women, and to brave
A peril, hold a foil, or break a horse.

THE DRESSMAKER

A slip of organdy. Too ravishing.

THE TAILOR

Well, when you know it's this Penthesilea—

THE DRESSMAKER

The collar's only pinned; the sleeve is basted.

THE TAILOR

Who leads the plot that I was speaking of—

THE DUKE

Ah! But your proof?

THE TAILOR

Just turn your head a little.
Look, but don't seem to, at that girl upon
Her knees, unpacking the dresses.

THE DUKE

That is she!
One evening in Vienna, she sprang out
Before me, wrapped in a cloak, and kissed my hand,
And ran away, crying, "I have a right
To pay my homage to the Emperor's son,
The head of my house!"

He looks at her again.

Yes, she's a Bonaparte.
She looks like me—but stronger. Her hair is
Black, like my father's, and my hair is blonde.

MARIE-LOUISE

Going to the door of her apartments, to the dressmaker.

We'll try them on in here. Come in, my dear.

To the duke.

Ah, Franz, at Paris they know how to dress!

THE DUKE

Yes, mother.

MARIE-LOUISE

Do you like Parisian fashions?

THE DUKE

Very gravely.

Oh, yes, Parisian tailors dress you well.

Marie-Louise, Scarampi and the girl go into Marie-Louise's apartments, carrying the gowns to try on.

THE DUKE

Turning eagerly to the young man.

Who are you?

THE YOUNG MAN

Romantically.

Does it matter? I am one
Without a name, weary of living in
An unheroic age, of smoking while
He talks of the ideal. What am I?
I do not know, and there's my trouble. Am I?
I would like to be,—but being isn't easy.
So, I read Victor Hugo's odes instead.
I tell you this, because all this is youth.
I am romantic, and am tired of it.
I am an artist, and young France; and further
I am a brigand in your highness' service.
To drive away my constant boredom, I've
Amused myself with waistcoats and cravats.
That's why they chose me for a tailor. I
May add, to finish my description, that
I am republican and king-destroying.
My life and dagger are at your command.

THE DUKE

A little surprised.

I like you, sir, but what you say is mad.

THE YOUNG MAN

With a smile, and more simply.

Don't judge me too much by my madness; I
Must be astonishing, in spite of myself.
But there is nothing false about the pain
That makes me seek forgetfulness in danger.

THE DUKE

Dreamily.

A pain?

THE YOUNG MAN

A great disgust with everything—

THE DUKE

A sickness of the soul—

THE YOUNG MAN

Great impulses,
That come to nothing—

THE DUKE

A vague uneasiness,
A false pride in our suffering, a pride
In having the palest of all foreheads—

THE YOUNG MAN

Highness!

THE DUKE

A scorn of those who can live satisfied—

THE YOUNG MAN

Your highness!

THE DUKE

Doubt—

THE YOUNG MAN

But where can you, so young,
Have learnt the human heart so well? All that
Is what I feel!

THE DUKE

Give me your hand, my friend.
They say that a young tree, transplanted, bears
The forest in its veins, and when the trees
Of the distant woodland suffer, suffers too;
Just so, though I know nothing of you, still
I feel the sickness of the youth of France.

THE YOUNG MAN

Or, rather, we feel yours; for what is this
Mantle, too heavy for you, that you bear?
Child, all whose glory is already stolen,
Pale prince, so pale behind your black cravat,
What makes you pale?

THE DUKE

I am his son.

THE YOUNG MAN

Well, we,—
Weak, feverish, tormented by the past,
And murmuring, "What is there left to do?"
—We are all, a little, sons of that same father.

THE DUKE

You are his soldiers' sons: that too is great:
It lays on you a glorious heritage,
And gives you too a burden heavy as mine.
It heartens me to think that I can say,
They are the sons of soldiers of the Empire:
And they will hail the son of the Emperor.

The Countess Camerata appears, pretending to look for something.

THE COUNTESS

Loudly.

Excuse me, but a scarf—

In an undertone.

Hush! I have been
Selling like mad.

THE DUKE

Thank you.

THE COUNTESS

But I would rather
Sell swords! I hate this playing with dolls!

THE DUKE

I know
That you're a warrior.

MARIE-LOUISE'S VOICE

Have you found the scarf?

THE COUNTESS

I'm looking for it!

THE DUKE

Taking her hand.

In that dainty hand
A whip would—

THE COUNTESS

I adore a rearing horse!

THE DUKE

You love the foils, too?

THE COUNTESS

And the sabre!

THE DUKE

Ready
For anything?

THE COUNTESS

Calling through the half-open door.

I'm looking everywhere!
—For your imperial highness, anything!

THE DUKE

You have the spirit of a lioness.

THE COUNTESS

I have a great name.

THE DUKE

What?

THE COUNTESS

Napoléone.

SCARAMPI'S VOICE

Haven't you found it?

THE COUNTESS

No.

MARIE-LOUISE'S VOICE

Impatiently.

On the harpsichord!

THE COUNTESS

In a hurried undertone.

I must go back. Talk over our great plan.

She takes the scarf from her bosom, and loudly.

Ah, here it is!

SCARAMPI'S VOICE

You've found it?

THE COUNTESS

It was on

The harp.

She goes back into Marie-Louise's apartments, saying.

Now then, you pucker this scarf—

The door is closed.

THE YOUNG MAN

Eagerly.

Well,
Do you accept?

THE DUKE

Calmly.

What I don't understand
Is this—republican imperialism.

THE YOUNG MAN

It's true that I'm a liberal, but still—

THE DUKE

You reach me by a by-way.

THE YOUNG MAN

All roads lead
To the King of Rome! I thought my color was
Pure scarlet, but it has—

THE DUKE

Ironically.

Been faded by
The sun?

THE YOUNG MAN

Yes, by the sun of Austerlitz!
His history can stir our sluggish blood;
We tell of the battles that we do not fight,
Forgetting all their blood, remembering
Their glory, till the Emperor is to us
He with a capital, the only He!
It's now he makes his greatest conquests, for
He has no soldiers, but he has his poets!

THE DUKE

In short?

THE YOUNG MAN

In short,—this god in exile—this
Unworthy age—your touching fate—our boredom—
All that—I thought—

THE DUKE

You were an artist: you
Thought it was rather grand to call yourself
A Bonapartist.

THE YOUNG MAN

Well, but—still do you
Accept?

THE DUKE

No.

THE YOUNG MAN

What?

THE DUKE

I listened carefully,
And you were charming, but I never heard
The voice of France, but only fashion speaking,
Fashion and literature.

THE YOUNG MAN

That is my fault.
If only you could hear the countess—

THE DUKE

No.
I love the boldness in her haughty eye,
But that's not France; that is my family.
And, when you send for me—another time—

Let your appeal be made by some rough voice
In which the people's soul is heard. But now,
My young Byronic friend—so like myself!—
Don't blame yourself, for nothing could have won me:
I am not ready to be emperor.

THE COUNTESS

Coming in from Marie-Louise's apartments.

Not ready?

Turning and speaking quickly through the half-open door.

No, don't come,—I understand;
For the ball tonight, the white, and not the mauve!

Closing the door.

Not ready? What do you need?

THE DUKE

A year of dreaming,
Of work.

THE COUNTESS

No! Come and reign!

THE DUKE

My forehead is
Not lined.

THE COUNTESS

The crown will mark your forehead.

THE DUKE

Motioning toward his desk.

Yes,
The golden crown around my student's lamp.

THE YOUNG MAN

One must be ready for the occasion—

THE DUKE

Ah,
The occasion! Is this then the tailor speaking?

THE COUNTESS

But—

THE DUKE

No. I have no genius, but I have
A conscience: I must have three hundred nights
Of sleeplessness.

THE YOUNG MAN

But this refusal will
Confirm the rumors—!

THE COUNTESS

Yes! They say that you
Were never really on our side!

THE YOUNG MAN

You are
A Bonaparte; they take you for a Hapsburg.

THE COUNTESS

They say they're making you a coward!

THE YOUNG MAN

That
They teach you lies.

THE COUNTESS

That you don't even know
The truth about your father!

THE DUKE

They say that?

THE YOUNG MAN

What shall we tell them?

THE DUKE

Violently.

Tell them—

A door opens and Dietrichstein appears. The duke turns toward him, and very naturally.

Yes, dear count?

DIETRICHSTEIN

Von Obenaus is here.

THE DUKE

My history lesson?

Let him come in.

Dietrichstein goes out. The duke indicates the scattered garments to the young man and the countess, saying.

Take all the time you can
To get your things together. Try to make them
Forget you're there.

Dietrichstein comes back with Baron von Obenaus.

Good morning, baron.

Carelessly to the countess and the young man, pointing to a screen.

There,
Do up your packages behind that screen.

To Obenaus.

My tailor—

OBENAUS

Ah!

THE DUKE

And my mother's dressmaker.

OBENAUS

Oh, yes.

THE DUKE

They won't disturb you?

OBENAUS

Seating himself behind the table, with Dietrichstein.

Not at all.

THE DUKE

Seating himself opposite his tutors.

I'm at your service, gentlemen. I'll just
Sharpen this pencil, to jot down a date
Or an idea.

OBENAUS

Let us begin the lesson
Where we left off. We were in eighteen five,
I think?

THE DUKE

Sharpening his pencil.

Exactly.

OBENAUS

Then, in eighteen six—

THE DUKE

So, no event had marked the year?

OBENAUS

What year?

THE DUKE

Blowing the dust off his paper.

Why, eighteen five.

OBENAUS

Pardon—I thought—No. Fate
Was cruel to the cause of right. We'll cast
Only a rapid glance on this sad time.

Taking refuge in a grandiloquent generalization.

When the philosopher views history—

THE DUKE

So there was nothing of importance, sir,
In eighteen five?

OBENAUS

Oh, yes, your highness; I
Came near forgetting one noteworthy thing,
The restoration of the calendar.
—A little later, Spain and England quarreled—

THE DUKE

Innocently.

And the Emperor?

OBENAUS

Which emperor?

THE DUKE

My father.

OBENAUS

He—er—

THE DUKE

He had not left Boulogne?

OBENAUS

Oh, yes.

THE DUKE

Then where was he?

OBENAUS

Why—in this neighborhood.

THE DUKE

In astonishment.

Indeed!

DIETRICHSTEIN

Quickly.

His interest in Bavaria,
You know—

OBENAUS

At the Treaty of Pressburg, he agreed
With the Hapsburgs on Bavaria.

THE DUKE

What was
The Treaty of Pressburg?

OBENAUS

Learnedly vague.

It was the agreement
Which terminated a whole period.

THE DUKE

Oh!—I've broken my point!

OBENAUS

In eighteen seven—

THE DUKE

Already?

He has calmly repointed his pencil.

That will do.—How queer it is
That nothing happened all this time.

OBENAUS

Oh, no,
Your highness, look at Portugal: the king—

THE DUKE

More and more innocently.

But the Emperor?

OBENAUS

Which emperor?

THE DUKE

Of France.

OBENAUS

Nothing remarkable till eighteen eight;
Just note the Treaty of Tilsitt—

THE DUKE

Very innocently.

But what did
They find to treat about?

OBENAUS

Attempting to resume.

Then, Europe—

THE DUKE

Oh,
You're going on!

OBENAUS

Oh, yes; I'm only giving
A general survey—

THE DUKE

There was something else?

OBENAUS

Why—

THE DUKE

What?

OBENAUS

I—

THE DUKE

What? What happened? Tell me!

OBENAUS

Whispering.

But
I—I don't know—You are pleased to laugh at me—

THE DUKE

You do not know? Then I will tell you.

Rising.

On
The sixth of October, eighteen hundred five—

DIETRICHSTEIN AND OBENAUS

Springing to their feet.

Eh? What?

THE DUKE

When no one thought to see him, when
Vienna, seeing the eagle circling for
The swoop, said to herself "It's over London,"
—Having left Strassburg, crossed the Rhine at Kehl,
The Emperor—

OBENAUS

The Emperor?

THE DUKE

And you
Know which!—Gains Wurtemburg and Baden—

DIETRICHSTEIN

Lord!
Oh, lord!

THE DUKE

—Plays Austria a reveille
Of trumpets by Murat and drums by Soult,
Allows his marshals to win victories
At Wertingen and Augsburg, just to whet
Their appetites—

OBENAUS

Your highness!

THE DUKE

—Follows up
His strategy, and reaches Ulm without
Having once taken off his boots, there orders
Ney to take Elchingen, draws up a calm,
Joyful and terrible dispatch, prepares
The attack; the seventeenth of October sees
This hero standing, at his feet the arms
Of twenty-seven thousand Austrians
And eighteen generals!—And the Emperor
Begins again!

OBENAUS

Your highness!

THE DUKE

In November,
He's at Vienna, sleeps at Schoenbrunn, in
My room!

OBENAUS

But—

THE DUKE

He pursues the enemy;
Knows that he has them in his hand; one night
He tells the camp, "Tomorrow!" The next day,
He rides along the front line, saying, "Men,
We must finish with a thunder-clap!" He goes,
A spot of gray upon the scarlet staff;
The army is a sea; he awaits the sun;
From a promontory, sees it rise; and with
A smile he puts that sun in history!

OBENAUS

Oh, Dietrichstein!

THE DUKE

Then, look!

DIETRICHSTEIN

Oh, Obenaus!

THE DUKE

Striding up and down with growing fever.

Panic and death! Two emperors beaten by
The Emperor! Twenty thousand prisoners!

OBENAUS

Following him.

I beg your highness—!

DIETRICHSTEIN

Also following him.

Think if any one—!

THE DUKE

The campaign ended! Corpses floating on
The ice-floes in the lake! And my grandfather
Coming to see my father in his camp!

DIETRICHSTEIN

Your highness!

THE DUKE

Dwelling implacably on the words.

In—his—*camp!*

OBENAUS

Pray, pray be silent!

THE DUKE

My father granting peace to my grandfather!

DIETRICHSTEIN

If any one heard—

THE DUKE

And then the captured flags
Distributed! Eight to the city of Paris!

The countess and the young man have little by little slipped out from behind the screen, pale and trembling. They have finished packing their things, and are trying to reach the door on tiptoe, still listening to the duke, but in their excitement their boxes slip from their hands and fall down with a clatter.

OBENAUS

Turning and seeing them.

Oh!

THE DUKE

Fifty to the Senate!

OBENAUS

Oh! Those people!

DIETRICHSTEIN

Get out! And hurry!

THE DUKE

Fifty to Notre-Dame!

OBENAUS

Oh, lord!

THE DUKE

Beside himself, with a gesture that distributes thousands of standards.

The flags!

DIETRICHSTEIN

Hurrying the countess and the young man, who are picking up their packages.

Your hats and dresses! Take them!
Here! Quicker! Go away!

THE DUKE

Falling exhausted in an armchair.

The flags! The flags!

The countess and the young man go out.

DIETRICHSTEIN

They were here all the time!

THE DUKE

Through a fit of coughing.

The flags!

DIETRICHSTEIN

Oh, what
A business! Highness—

THE DUKE

I'll say nothing.

DIETRICHSTEIN

Yes,
It's rather late now to say nothing. What
Will Metternich say to this? Those people here!

THE DUKE

Wiping his forehead.

Besides, that's all I've studied for today.

He coughs again.

Professor—

DIETRICHSTEIN

Pouring him a glass of water.

You are coughing? Quick, some water!

THE DUKE

After taking a swallow.

Am I not doing well in history?

DIETRICHSTEIN

You've had no books, I know!

OBENAUS

When Metternich

Knows this—

THE DUKE

Coldly.

You will not tell him this. Besides,
He'd only blame you.

DIETRICHSTEIN

Aside to Obenaus.

We had better say
Nothing, and let the prince's mother speak
To him.

He knocks at Marie-Louise's door.

The duchess?

SCARAMPI

Appearing.

Come in. She is ready.

THE DUKE

To Obenaus.

I hope your course for my especial use
Is ended now?

OBENAUS

Raising his hands to heaven.

How could you know? That's what
I cannot understand!

Marie-Louise comes in in great agitation. She is wearing a magnificent ball gown, and has her cloak on. Dietrichstein and Obenaus slip out.

MARIE-LOUISE

Good heavens! What
Is this? What do I hear? You shall explain
To me—

THE DUKE

Showing her the twilight through the open window.

Look, mother. The hour is sweet. The stillness
Is broken only by belated birds.
How softly does the evening lose its gold!
The trees are—

MARIE-LOUISE

What! Do you love nature? You?

THE DUKE

Perhaps.

MARIE-LOUISE

Trying to resume her severity.

You shall explain—

THE DUKE

Ah, mother, breathe
That perfume. All the woodland has come in
With the air.

MARIE-LOUISE

Explain, I tell you—!

THE DUKE

Every breath
Brings in a branch—a lovelier enchantment
Than that which terrified Macbeth: this is
Not a mere wood that walks, that marches like
An army, mother, but this scent upon
The evening is a wood with wings, a forest
That flies.

MARIE-LOUISE

What! You poetic?

THE DUKE

So it seems.

The distant music of the ball is heard.

Listen! A waltz—a hackneyed tune—but made
More noble by the space it's passed. Perhaps
Crossing this woodland where the Master wandered,
Beside a fern, or near a cyclamen,
It's met the soul of Beethoven.

MARIE-LOUISE

What! You?
Musical, too?

THE DUKE

Yes, when I wish. But, mother,
I do not wish. I hate the spell of sounds,
And on a lovely evening, I feel,
And fear, a something—blond, that makes me tender.

MARIE-LOUISE

My son, that something in you is your mother.

THE DUKE

I would not have said so.

MARIE-LOUISE

You hate it?

THE DUKE

I

Love you.

MARIE-LOUISE

Plaintively.

Then think a little how you hurt me!
—Metternich and my father were so kind
To us; so when they drew up the decree
To make you count, I said, "No! Not a count!
A duke at least! A duke's worth being."—You
Are Duke of Reichstadt.

THE DUKE

Reciting.

Count of Gross-Bohen, Schwaben,
Tirnovan, Buchtierad, and Kron-Pornitz—chen.

He pretends to pronounce with difficulty like a Frenchman.

If I pronounce them badly, pardon me.

MARIE-LOUISE

Then, it was hard to fix your highness' rank,
To be in a decree exact and yet
Discreet; just think how tactful they all were!
Everything went as easily as could be;
Your father's name was never mentioned.

THE DUKE

Why
Did they not put: "father unknown"?

MARIE-LOUISE

You might
Be, with your income, the most charming prince
Of Austria, and the richest.

THE DUKE

Richest—

MARIE-LOUISE

And
Most charming prince—

THE DUKE

Of Austria.

MARIE-LOUISE

Come, taste
Your happiness!

THE DUKE

I've sucked its juices out.

MARIE-LOUISE

You have precedence after the archdukes.
Some day you'll marry an archduchess, or
A princess, or—

THE DUKE

In a voice grown suddenly deep.

I never cease to see
The glimpse I had in childhood, of his throne,
The back round, like a drum, and on the back,
In gold that Saint Helena's burnished since,
The small and simple N, the letter that
Says "No!" to time!

MARIE-LOUISE

But—

THE DUKE

I still see the N
With which he marked the shoulders of kings!

MARIE-LOUISE

Of kings
Whose blood is your blood through your mother!

THE DUKE

I
Have no need of their blood! What should I do
With it?

MARIE-LOUISE

That noble heritage?

THE DUKE

Seems mean
To me!

MARIE-LOUISE

What! Are you not proud of the blood
Of Charles the Fifth?

THE DUKE

No! for a hundred others
Bear in their veins that old and royal blood;
But when I think that I bear in my veins
The blood of a Corsican lieutenant, I
Could weep to see how blue my hand is!

MARIE-LOUISE

Franz!—

THE DUKE

The old blood only makes me feverish.
If I've the blood of kings, it must be let!

MARIE-LOUISE

Be silent!

THE DUKE

What am I saying? If I had,
I have it now no longer, I am sure.
The two bloods must have fought in me, and mine,
As always, must have driven yours away!

MARIE-LOUISE

Be silent, Duke of Reichstadt!

THE DUKE

Metternich,
That fool, thinks he has written across my life,
"The Duke of Reichstadt." Yes, but lift the page
To the sunlight, and the word "Napoleon"
Is in the water-mark!

MARIE-LOUISE

Frightened, and drawing back.

My son!

THE DUKE

Going toward her.

The Duke
Of Reichstadt, did you say? No, no! And do
You know what my real name is? It is that
The crowd at the Prater murmured round my carriage:
"The little Bonaparte!"

He seizes her by the wrists, and shakes her.

I am his son!
And nothing but his son!

MARIE-LOUISE

You are hurting me!

THE DUKE

Catching her in his arms.

Mother! Forgive me, mother!

With the tenderest and most sorrowful pity.

Go to the ball!
Forget all that I said. It all was madness.
You do not even need to tell it, mother,
To Metternich.

MARIE-LOUISE

Already a little reassured.

I do not need—

THE DUKE

The waltz
Is playing in the distance. No, don't tell
Him anything. Yes, that will save you trouble.
Forget it! You forget so easily!

MARIE-LOUISE

But—

THE DUKE

Talking to her as to a child, and taking her gradually to the door.

Think of Parma, of the palace of Sala,
And of your happy life! Was that white forehead
Made to be darkened by a black wing's shadow?
—I love you more than you dare to believe!—
Don't trouble yourself with anything,—not even
With being faithful. I will be that for two.
And let me lead you gently toward your ball.
Good-night. Don't wet your slippers in the moss.

He kisses her on the forehead.

There, I have kissed away your cares.—Your hair
Is done enchantingly.

MARIE-LOUISE

Quickly.

You think so?

THE DUKE

Yes.
The carriage is below. The night is fair.
Good-night. Enjoy yourself!

Marie-Louise goes out. He comes down, swaying a little, and falls into a chair before his table, with his head in his hands.

My poor, poor mother.

With a sudden change of tone, pulling his books and papers together under the lamp.

To work!

The sound of a carriage driving away is heard. The door at the back opens mysteriously and Gentz appears, ushering in a woman wrapped in a cloak.

GENTZ

In an undertone, after listening a moment.

The carriage has gone.

He calls the duke.

Prince!

THE DUKE

Turning and seeing the woman.

Fanny!

FANNY ELSSLER

Throwing back her cloak and appearing all rose and gold in her dancer's dress, standing on the tips of her toes with arms outspread.

Franz!

GENTZ

Aside, withdrawing.

This will distract his mind from dreams of empire.

FANNY

In the duke's arms.

Franz!

GENTZ

Going out.

Splendid!

FANNY

My own Franz!

The door closes behind Gentz. Fanny quickly moves away from the duke, and respectfully, after a sweeping courtesy.

Your highness!

THE DUKE

Looking after Gentz.

Gone!

To Fanny.

Quick!

FANNY

After a pirouette, seats herself upon the duke's table with the light spring of a dancer.

I have learnt a great deal for today.

THE DUKE

Sitting down before the table, eagerly.

Go on!

FANNY

Laying her hand on the duke's hair, and slowly, knitting her pretty brows, in the tone of one saying a lesson.

So then, while Ney marched on all night,
The generals Gazan—

THE DUKE

Eagerly, learning the names by heart.

Gazan!

FANNY

Suchet—

THE DUKE

Suchet!

FANNY

Filled up the time with cannonades;
And when the day broke, the imperial guard—

The curtain falls.

ACT II

BEATING WINGS

A year later, at the palace of Schoenbrunn

The Lacquer Drawing-room. All the walls are covered with antique lacquer, in shining black panels filled with little landscapes, houses, birds and tiny people in gold, and framed in wood carved and gilded in a heavy and sumptuous German rococo style. The molding at the top of the walls is made of bits of lacquer. The doors are lacquered, and the door-frames are made of more costly lacquer-work.

At the back, between two lacquer panels, a high window in a deep lacquered recess. The wrought-iron balcony beyond shows the black double-headed eagle in silhouette.

The window gives a wide view of the park of Schoenbrunn. Between two walls of clipped hedges with niches framing statues are the patterned flower-beds of a French garden; and at the top of a grassed terrace in the distance, at the very end of the formal gardens, beyond the marble group at the pool, the Gloriette, a Corinthian portico, rises against the sky, its colonnades shining white upon the blue.

Two doors to the right, two doors to the left. Between the doors two heavy console-tables face each other. And above the tables, in gilded frames with the imperial crown at the top, two haughty Austrian ancestral portraits.

This room serves as drawing-room for the Duke of Reichstadt's suite of apartments in a wing of the palace. The two doors at the left open into his bed-chamber, which is the same room in which Napoleon I slept when he twice occupied Schoenbrunn. The two doors at the right open upon the succession of drawing-rooms which lead to the rest of the palace.

The prince has arranged the room to work in: a great table covered with books, papers and maps; a huge map of Europe half unrolled. Around the table, several armchairs borrowed from the neighboring *Gobelin Zimmer*, mediocre gilt woodwork covered with beautiful tapestries.

In the left-hand corner, in front, a large cheval-glass, set a little obliquely, so as to show only the back of black lacquer.

Devoutly arranged upon the console at the left, a French grenadier's

bonnet, a pair of red epaulettes, a sabre, and other pieces of equipment, and on the wall an old musket with bayonet fixed. On the other console, nothing.

On a table in a corner a huge box. Scattered everywhere, books, riding-crops, splendid pistols and swords, hunting-whips, and so forth.

At the rise of the curtain, ten footmen are drawn up in a row before Count Sedlinsky, who is seated in an armchair. An usher is standing by him.

SEDLINSKY

That's all?

FIRST FOOTMAN

That's all.

SEDLINSKY

Nothing unusual?

SECOND FOOTMAN

Nothing unusual.

THIRD FOOTMAN

He reads much.

FOURTH FOOTMAN

He

Eats little.

FIFTH FOOTMAN

He sleeps very badly.

SEDLINSKY

To the usher.

Are

You sure of his valets?

THE USHER

Oh, yes, sir; they're all

Gendarmes who've been long in the service.

SEDLINSKY

Thanks.

Rising.

But I'm afraid the duke may find me here.

FIRST FOOTMAN

The duke has gone out now.

SECOND FOOTMAN

As usual.

THIRD FOOTMAN

In uniform.

FOURTH FOOTMAN

And with the officers
Of his regiment.

THE USHER

They will be practising
Maneuvers.

SEDLINSKY

Then—be watchful, but be cautious.
Spy on the duke without his guessing it.

THE USHER

Smiling.

I am clever.

SEDLINSKY

Don't be zealous. When my men
Are zealous, then I tremble. Above all,
Don't listen at his keyholes, ten or twelve
Together.

THE USHER

I've assigned one footman only
To that.

SEDLINSKY

Which one?

THE USHER

The Piedmontese.

SEDLINSKY

Good; he's
Very intelligent.

THE USHER

I station him
Here, when his highness has retired at night
To his own room.

He indicates the door of the duke's room at the left.

SEDLINSKY

He's there now?

THE USHER

No. As he
Must stay awake all night, in the daytime, when
The duke is out, he sleeps in an armchair. He
Will be there when the duke comes back.

SEDLINSKY

Yes, let
Him watch him.

THE USHER

Very good.

SEDLINSKY

Glancing at the table.

These papers?

THE USHER

Searched.

SEDLINSKY

Looking under the table.

The basket?

He quickly falls on his knees, seeing some bits of paper on the carpet around the wastebasket.

Scraps?

He tries to put them together.

A letter, perhaps—from whom?

Overcome by professional curiosity he goes clear under the table, picking up the scraps and trying to read them. At this moment a door at the right opens and the duke enters, followed by his military staff: General Hartmann, Captain Foresti, and others. The footmen precipitately range themselves in line. The duke is in uniform: a white buttoned tunic with a green collar and silver braiding upon the sleeves, a great white cloak over his shoulders; a cocked hat of black with a green oak-leaf embroidered on the turned-up brim; the orders of Maria Theresa and Saint Stephen; the sash of great black and yellow silk cords joining the sword-belt; high black boots.

THE DUKE

Very naturally, looking at the two legs which are all that can be seen from under the table.

Well, well! How are you, Count Sedlinsky?

SEDLINSKY

In amazement, appearing on all fours.

Highness!

THE DUKE

An accident. I beg your pardon. I
Will leave you.

SEDLINSKY

You have recognized me; but
I was—

THE DUKE

Flat on your stomach. Oh, yes, I
Recognized you at once.

He sees the archduchess, who comes in quickly. She is wearing a garden frock and a wide straw hat, and has under her arm a richly bound album which she lays on the table with her parasol. She seems anxious.

Well, well, dear aunt,
Has somebody been frightening you?

THE ARCHDUCHESS

I heard—

THE DUKE

It's nothing.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Taking his hand.

Still—

THE DUKE

Seeing Dietrichstein, who comes in quickly and anxiously, bringing in Doctor Malfatti.

The doctor? I'm not ill!

To the archduchess.

Nothing—a fit of coughing. I've just left
Parade; I've shouted too much, that is all.

To the doctor, who is feeling his pulse while he talks.

Doctor, you bore me!

To Sedlinsky, who has taken advantage of the interruption to reach the door.

It is very kind
Of you to arrange my papers for me. You
Will spoil me. You've already given me
All of your friends for servants.

SEDLINSKY

Does your highness
Imagine—

THE DUKE

Carelessly.

I'd be very much obliged,
If only I were better served. But they
All dress me badly; my cravat rides up,
And will you notice, my dear count—since service
Of this kind seems to be your province here—
That for the last few days my boots have not
Been shining as they used to.

He sits down, drawing off his gloves, after giving his hat and sabre to his orderly, who takes them away. A footman has set a tray of refreshments on the table.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Offering the duke something.

Franz!

THE DUKE

To Sedlinsky, who has reached the door again.

Won't you
Have anything to eat?

SEDLINSKY

I've eaten—

THE DOCTOR

Toads.

THE DUKE

Foresti!

CAPTAIN FORESTI

Coming forward and saluting.

Colonel?

THE DUKE

Our maneuvers, day
After tomorrow: have the regiment
At Grosshofen at daybreak. You understand?

FORESTI

Yes, colonel.

THE DUKE

To the other officers.

You may leave me, gentlemen.

The officers go out. Sedlinsky starts to go with them. The duke calls him back.

Oh, my dear count!

Sedlinsky comes back. The duke takes a letter from his pocket and holds it out in the tips of his fingers.

Here's one you haven't read!

Sedlinsky lays the letter on the table with an offended air, and goes out.

DIETRICHSTEIN

You are severe with him!

THE ARCHDUCHESS

But is the duke,
Then, not at liberty?

DIETRICHSTEIN

Oh, he is not
A prisoner, but—

THE DUKE

Ah! I admire that *but*.
Do you know all that that *but* means? Oh, I
Am not a prisoner, *but*—. That's it. *But*. Not

A prisoner, *but*. That is the word. That is
The formula. A prisoner? Not an instant!
But—there are always people around me. I
A prisoner? What an idea! *But*—
When I go walking in the park, an eye
Blossoms beneath each leaf. I'm far from being
A prisoner, *but*—if anybody wants
To speak to me in private, from the wood
Of the door there grows the toadstool of an ear.
Really, I'm not a prisoner, *but*—if I
Go for a ride, I have the pleasant honor
Of an escort that I cannot see. I am
Not in the least a prisoner, *but*—I
Am the second to receive my letters. Not
A prisoner at all, *but*—every night
They place a footman at my door—

Motioning toward a great, grizzled, jovial-looking footman who has come in to get the tray, and is crossing the room, taking it out.

Look, there
He goes!—A prisoner? I, the Duke of Reichstadt!
Oh, never! I'm a *not-a-prisoner-but*.

DIETRICHSTEIN

A little stiffly.

I'm very glad to see this gaiety;
It's rather rare in you.

THE DUKE

Yes, very rare.

DIETRICHSTEIN

Bowing, to take his leave.

Good-day, your highness.

THE DUKE

Gravely.

No. My most serene
Highness.

DIETRICHSTEIN

Eh?

THE DUKE

Most serene! That title has
Been given me, and is peculiar to me.
Another time, please don't forget.

DIETRICHSTEIN

Bowing.

Good-day.

He goes out.

THE DUKE

Bitterly, to the archduchess.

Most serene highness! Funny, isn't it?

He throws himself into an armchair, and, noticing the album, which she has taken up again from the table.

What are you carrying?

THE ARCHDUCHESS

The emperor's
Herbarium.

THE DUKE

Oh, really? Grandpapa's
Pressed flowers?

He takes it on his knees.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Yes, he lent it me this morning.

THE DUKE

It's very pretty.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

You know Latin: what
Is that monstrosity, all black and dry?

THE DUKE

A rose.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Franz, you have not been perfectly
Well for some time now.

THE DUKE

Reading.

Bengalensis.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Oh!
Of Bengal.

THE DUKE

Congratulating her.

Very good.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

You're nervous; what
Is the matter?

THE DUKE

Nothing.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Yes, there is. I know!
It's your friend Prokesch, who had some wild hope
Of—some design that was too great and so
Was sent away.

THE DUKE

But, to make up, they brought
Me Marshal Marmont for a friend. In France
No one will speak to him, so he comes here
In order to be complimented on
Betraying my father!

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Hush!

THE DUKE

And that man tries
To make the son believe the father was—

With a violent movement.

Oh! I—!

Immediately checking himself, he looks at the herbarium and says, smiling

Volubilis.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

If I exact
A certain promise of you, is your highness
Resolved to keep it?

THE DUKE

Kissing her hand.

What you've always been
To me, resolves me.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

And I've given you
A pretty gift—for the fifteenth of August?

THE DUKE

Rising, and going over to the console-table at left.

Oh, yes, these keepsakes, from a trophy of
The archduke's—

He touches them, one by one.

Short-sword.—Guardsman's cap.—Old musket.

The archduchess makes a frightened movement.

It isn't loaded!—And, the best of all—

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Hush!

THE DUKE

Best of all, the thing we know about!

Mysteriously.

I've hidden it!

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Where, bandit?

THE DUKE

Indicating his bed-room.

In my den.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Idly turning the pages of the herbarium.

Then, promise me—you know your grandfather
—His kindness—

THE DUKE

Picking up a paper that has fallen from the album.

What is this? A paper?

He reads.

"If
The students at the University

Are obstinate in shouting at the troops,
Conscript them all."

To the archduchess.

I beg your pardon; you
Were saying: his kindness?

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Nervously fluttering the leaves of the album.

Yes, the emperor
Is very fond of you. His tenderness—

THE DUKE

Picking up another paper fallen from the book.

And what is this?

He reads.

"In crushing this revolt,
Order our cavalry to ride them down."
—Go on: his tenderness?

THE ARCHDUCHESS

He cannot like
This modern spirit of revolt, but he
Is a very good old man.

THE DUKE

Yes, he is—two
Old men.

Closing the herbarium.

Flowers from which stern orders fall,
The good old emperor is like his albums.
But still, he's popular. Yes, he knows how
To make his people love him. I love him
Myself.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

He could do everything to help
Your cause.

THE DUKE

Oh! If he would—!

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Then, promise me
You'll never try to escape until you have
Tried to win him—

THE DUKE

Giving her his hand.

I promise.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Taking it, with a little sigh of relief.

That is dear
Of you! Now I must pay you.

THE DUKE

Smiling.

Pay me, aunt?

THE ARCHDUCHESS

One has one's little influence, you know.
Your wonderful friend Prokesch, whom they sent
Away—I've talked so much, and done so much,
That—he is here.

She strikes the floor three times with her parasol. The door opens, and Prokesch appears. The archduchess slips out as the two friends run to each other.

THE DUKE

Oh, Prokesch! Back at last!

PROKESCH

In an undertone, looking around suspiciously.

Hush! Some one might be listening!

THE DUKE

Calmly and aloud.

Some one is.
But nothing ever is repeated.

PROKESCH

What?

THE DUKE

One day I talked high treason, just to see;
But nobody reported it.

PROKESCH

That's strange.

THE DUKE

I think the spy of the police is stealing
Their money, and is hard of hearing.—

PROKESCH

And
The countess? No news?

THE DUKE

None.

PROKESCH

Oh!

THE DUKE

None! She has
Forgotten me!—Perhaps she's been discovered!
—Perhaps—Why didn't I go last year? Oh, what

A fool I was!—No, I was right; I am
More ready now—but I'm forgotten!

PROKESCH

Hush!

Looking around.

You study here? It's charming.

THE DUKE

It's Chinese.
Oh, all these gilded birds, these sinister
Apes that hide all the walls with cunning smiles!
They put me in this Lacquer Drawing-room
So that against this somber black and gold
My uniform may show up better!

PROKESCH

Prince!

THE DUKE

Walking up and down.

They have surrounded me with fools for servants!

PROKESCH

What have you done these last six months?

THE DUKE

I've raged.

PROKESCH

Going to the balcony.

I don't know Schoenbrunn.

THE DUKE

It's a tomb!

PROKESCH

But there,
Against the sky, the Gloriette is lovely!

THE DUKE

Yes, when I eat my heart out with the longing
For glory, I may have—the Gloriette!

PROKESCH

Coming back to the duke.

And you have all the park to ride in.

THE DUKE

All
The park's too small!

PROKESCH

Then you have all the valley.

THE DUKE

The valley is too small to gallop in!

PROKESCH

What do you need for a gallop?

THE DUKE

Europe!

PROKESCH

Trying to calm him.

Hush!

THE DUKE

And when I close my Plutarch, when I lift
Eyes dazzled by the shining past, when I
Dismount from Caesar's galley, when I leave
My father, Alexander, Hannibal,—

A FOOTMAN

Appearing at the door left.

What costume will your highness wear to the ball
This evening?

THE DUKE

To Prokesch.

There!

To the footman, furiously.

I am not going!

The footman disappears.

PROKESCH

Turning over the books on the table.

So,
You can read everything now?

THE DUKE

Everything.
It's many months since Fanny learnt by heart
Her history to teach me.—After that
I found some one to give forbidden books
To me.

PROKESCH

Smiling.

The good archduchess?

THE DUKE

Yes. A book
Each day. At night I read them, and grew drunk
Upon them, in my bedroom. When I finished
A book, to hide it, I would throw it up
Upon the canopy above my bed.
There in the dark the books piled up so high
I slept beneath a dome of history.

By day they all lay quiet, but at night
When I slept, they awoke; the battles came
Out from the pages, opening their wings;
Laurel-leaves rained upon my sleeping eyelids;
Jena and Austerlitz came down the curtains
To fall into my dreams. Now, Metternich
One day sat there, and gravely told me about
My father—in his fashion. Just when I
Was looking my most innocent, and seeming
Most to believe him, down my canopy
Came crashing, underneath its weight of glory!
A hundred books whose fluttering leaves all stirred
A single name!

PROKESCH

Metternich started?

THE DUKE

No.
He smiled upon me like a bishop, and
Remarked, "You hang your book-shelf rather high,"
And left me. Now I read whatever I please.

PROKESCH

Taking up a book.

Even *The Man's Son?*

THE DUKE

Yes.

PROKESCH

That hateful book?

THE DUKE

Yes. That French book (your hatred is unjust)
Says that they poisoned me, and talks about

The Borgias. But, France, if your prince die,
Why spoil the beauty of his death? It is
Not of the poison of a melodrama
The Duke of Reichstadt's dying; it is of
His soul!

PROKESCH

Prince!

THE DUKE

Of my soul and of my name,
That name that's full of bells and cannon; where
The guns roll, the bells toll reproaches for
My idleness. Be silent, cannonades
And chimes, be silent! Poison, did he say?
As if I needed poison here in prison!

He goes up to the window.

Oh, what it is to wish to add new chapters
To history, and to be nothing but
A forehead pressed against the window!

He comes back to Prokesch.

I

Try to forget, sometimes. I fling myself
Upon my horse, and gallop madly off.
I gulp the swift, keen air, and lose all thought
Of anything but riding faster, breaking
My horse's heart and all my dreams at once.
I turn my eyes away from the poplar trees,
Like rows of soldiers in their bearskin bonnets;
I ride on; I forget my name; I breathe
In drunkenly the good strong smell of sweat
And dust and leather and crushed turf; at last
I drive away my dreams, and, happy, drunken,
And weary, I rein in my panting horse,

And raise my eyes—and see an eagle pass!

He drops into a chair, and sits for a moment leaning upon the table, his head in his hands, then resumes in a lower voice.

If only I could have faith in myself!

He bends a look of agony upon Prokesch.

You know me—what do you think of me? Oh, Prokesch,
Suppose I'm only—what they say we are,
And what we often are, I know,—we sons
Of great men! Metternich has often raised
That doubt in me. Oh, it's his duty as
An Austrian,—and he is right! He makes
Me tremble when he takes his brilliant wit,
Opens it like a jeweled snuff-box, and
Gravely takes out a stinging pinch.—But tell me,
What do you think of me? What am I worth?
You know me—can I be an emperor?

Despairingly.

God, may this forehead never wear the crown,
If its pallor's not that of a Bonaparte!

PROKESCH

Prince—

THE DUKE

Answer me! Ought I to scorn myself?
What am I? Tell me frankly. Is my forehead
Too heavy, are my hands too slim, to reign?
What do you think of me?

PROKESCH

Gravely taking both his hands.

Prince, if all princes
Knew these tormenting doubts and fears of yours,
There would be none but admirable kings.

THE DUKE

Embracing him.

Oh, thanks, thanks, Prokesch! How you comfort me!
To work, my friend!

A footman brings in a tray of letters, lays them on a table, and goes out. He is the one the duke designated a little while before as the guard of his door, the one the usher called the Piedmontese.

PROKESCH

Ah, here's your mail—and what
A pile of letters!

THE DUKE

Eh? Oh, yes,—from women.
Letters like those—one lets them come.

PROKESCH

I must
Congratulate you on your great success.

THE DUKE

See what it is to have the fatal halo!

Prokesch opens a letter and passes it to him. He reads.

"Yesterday, at the Opera, how pale—"
I tear it up.

He tears it up, and takes another.

"Ah me, that forehead which—"
I tear it up.

He tears it up, and Prokesch passes him a third.

"I watched you ride your horse—"
I tear it up.

PROKESCH

What? Every one?

THE DUKE

Taking another.

"Your youth,
Dear prince, your inexperience—" It's from
The canoness! I tear it up.

The door opens softly, and Thérèse appears.

THÉRÈSE

Timidly.

Oh, pardon—

THE DUKE

Turning.

You, Little Spring?

THÉRÈSE

Why do you always call
Me that?

THE DUKE

It's sweet. It's pure. It suits you.

THÉRÈSE

I
Am going, tomorrow, to Parma, to attend
Your mother.

THE DUKE

With a forced smile.

We must shed a tear for you.

THÉRÈSE

Sadly.

To Parma!

THE DUKE

It's the land of violets.

THÉRÈSE

Yes.

THE DUKE

If my mother doesn't know it, tell her!

THÉRÈSE

Yes, highness. And—good-bye.

She goes slowly toward the door.

THE DUKE

Go, flow along
Your valley, Little Spring!

THÉRÈSE

Why "Little Spring"?

THE DUKE

Because—because I often have refreshed
Myself with the sweet, cool water sleeping in
Your eyes and running in your voice.

THÉRÈSE

And—you
Have nothing else to say?

THE DUKE

No, nothing else.

THÉRÈSE

Good-bye—your highness, then.

She goes out.

THE DUKE

I tear it up.

PROKESCH

I see.

THE DUKE

She loves me—and I might have—But
We must make history and not love-stories!
To work! Begin again the course you gave me
In strategy.

PROKESCH

Unrolling a paper and laying it on the table.

Here. I submit a plan.
Criticize it.

THE DUKE

Pushing aside books and arms and clearing a space on the table for a battlefield.

Wait. Bring me first—you see,
There in the corner?—that big box that holds
My wooden soldiers. I can work it out
Better upon our little battlefield.

PROKESCH

Bringing the box.

Show how this plan is dangerous.

THE DUKE

Laying his hand on the box.

There are
The soldiers of Napoleon the Second!

PROKESCH

Reproachfully.

Prince!

THE DUKE

They watch me so closely here, that even
—Open the box—even my wooden soldiers

Are Austrians. Here, give me one. We'll place
Our left wing here, and—

Prokesch passes him a soldier, which he takes without looking at it, bent upon his problem, puts it down, then, suddenly, seeing it.

Why!

PROKESCH

What is it?

THE DUKE

It's
A grenadier of the imperial guard!

Prokesch hands him others.

A fugleman!—A rifleman!—A light
Hussar!—A cuirassier!—A heavy dragoon!
—They are French! Somebody has repainted all
These little pinewood soldiers!

He eagerly pulls them all out.

French!—French!—French!

PROKESCH

What is this miracle?

THE DUKE

Why, some one has
Recarved them and repainted them, I tell you!

PROKESCH

Some one?

THE DUKE

And some one that's a soldier!

PROKESCH

Why?

THE DUKE

The coats of royal blue have seven buttons;
The collars are correct, the linings faithful;
Frogs, fringes, braiding, tassels, everything
Is there! This some one never hesitated
Over a single edging or a facing!
The piping's white, the pocket-flaps three-pointed!
—Whoever you are, my friend, I thank you; with
Clasped hands I thank you, unknown soldier, who
Have even in this prison found the means
—I don't know how, I don't know where—to paint
These soldiers for me! Little wooden army,
Who is the hero—even if he is
A hero only in this little thing—
Who has equipped you with those belts that smile
Up at me in their whiteness? How has he
Managed to keep it secret? Oh, whose is
The careful, loving pencil that has given
Them all their little moustaches, that has traced
Cross-belts and sabertasches, that has not
Even forgotten to dip into gilding,
To give the officers their hilts and horns!

With growing excitement.

Take them all out! Cover the table! Here
Are the infantry with their green epaulettes!
Here are the riflemen, and here the Guard!
Take them out, take the little conquerors out!
Look, Prokesch! Shut up in this box—just look—
Is all the Army of the Empire! Here
Are the Mamelukes, and there,—look!—there I know
The crimson breastplates of the Polish lancers!
Here are the scouts in purple trousers! Here,
In leggings of a different color, are

The grenadiers of the line, with waving plumes,
Who rush to the attack in gaiters of white,
And the chasseurs, with pear-shaped green cockades,
Who run upon their death in boots of black!

Sighing.

Ah, as a dreaming prisoner can make
Himself a waving forest from a tree
Of shavings from a doll's house, I can make
The Legend with these wooden soldiers!

He draws back from the table.

But

It's true! Already I can't see the round
Of wood that holds them up! Draw back a step
From this small army, Prokesch, and you'd say
Only the distance made them look so small!

He begins feverishly arranging the soldiers.

Come, draw them up! We'll make an Austerlitz,
A Wagram!

He seizes a sabre from among the arms on the console-table, and lays it across his battlefield.

Here! This naked sword is water,—
The Danube—

He points to imaginary places.

Essling.—Aspern, yonder, in
The box. Now, throw a paper bridge across
The shining steel, and give me two or three
Horse-grenadiers.—We need some rising ground.
Take the *Memorial*.—There, General
Molitor—there, Saint Cyr,—and over there,
Crossing the bridge—

A moment before, Metternich has come in, and, standing behind the duke, who is kneeling before the table, he follows the maneuvers.

METTERNICH

Crossing the bridge?

THE DUKE

Starting and turning round.

The Guard!

METTERNICH

Putting up his eyeglass.

So, all the army's French today, it seems?
Where are the Austrians?

THE DUKE

They've run away.

METTERNICH

Indeed! Indeed!

He picks up one of the soldiers, and turns it around.

Who has been daubing these?

THE DUKE

Nobody.

METTERNICH

Was it you? You spoil the toys
We give you?

THE DUKE

Turning pale.

But, sir—

Metternich rings and a footman appears—the same one who came in a short time before.

METTERNICH

Take these things, and have
Them thrown away. We'll get you new ones.

THE DUKE

No!

I want no others! If you keep me here
Playing with toys, then let me have at least
Toys that are worthy of a prince.

METTERNICH

What bee
—What *golden* bee—is in your bonnet now?

THE DUKE

Advancing upon him with clenched fists.

Sir, I would have you know that irony
Is little to my taste, and—

THE FOOTMAN

The footman, as he passes behind the duke to carry the soldiers away, aside and hurriedly.

Never mind,
Your highness; I will paint the new ones, too.

METTERNICH

Who has started to go out, turning haughtily at the duke's threat.

What did you say?

THE DUKE

Suddenly calm, and with forced humility.

Nothing,—a moment's fit
Of anger. I am sorry. I beg your pardon.

Aside.

I can submit, now; there is somebody
Behind me.

METTERNICH

I was going to get your friend.

THE DUKE

My friend?

METTERNICH

Yes, Marshal Marmont.

PROKESCH

With suppressed indignation.

Marmont!

METTERNICH

Looking at Prokesch.

He

Is one of those it pleases me to see here.

PROKESCH

I do not doubt it.

METTERNICH

He's outside.

THE DUKE

Very cordially.

Oh, bring

Him in, by all means!

Metternich goes out. Scarcely has the door closed, when the duke falls into the armchair, beating his forehead in despair.

Oh, my father!—glory!

—His mantle!—his eagles!—the imperial throne!—

The door is heard opening. The duke sits up, at once calm and smiling, and, very naturally, to Marmont, who comes in with Metternich.

How do you do this morning, Marshal Marmont?

METTERNICH

Come, Prokesch, let me show you the duke's room.

He takes him by the arm and leads him away.

MARMONT

Seating himself at a sign from the duke.

Your highness, this is my last visit; for
I have taught you all I know about him.

THE DUKE

That's
A pity, for you spoke so well.

MARMONT

I've drawn
A faithful portrait for your highness.

THE DUKE

Faithful!
Well, nothing else to tell?

MARMONT

No, nothing else.

THE DUKE

Not one more recollection of his youth?

MARMONT

Not one.

THE DUKE

To sum up: he was very great.

MARMONT

Oh, very great.

THE DUKE

But, still, except for you,
He might perhaps—

MARMONT

Yes, sometimes I averted—

THE DUKE

Disaster.

MARMONT

Encouraged.

He was wrong to put so much
Faith in—

THE DUKE

His star.

MARMONT

I'm glad that we're agreed
In our conclusions.

THE DUKE

And, as we were saying,
He was a—

MARMONT

Abandoning all pretense.

Oh, he was undoubtedly
A very able general, but one
Could never call him—

THE DUKE

You miserable traitor!

MARMONT

Rising.

Eh?

THE DUKE

Now that today I've finished taking
From you all of your memories of him,
All that in spite of you was splendid in you,
I throw you away! You are empty!

MARMONT

But I—

THE DUKE

You
To have betrayed him—you, Duke of Ragusa!
I know how, when you saw your old companion
Made emperor, you said to yourself, "Why he,
Instead of me?"—But you! You whom he loved
From your lowest rank together—loved you so
That he made his soldiers jealous! You he made
A marshal at thirty!

MARMONT

Drily.

Thirty-five.

THE DUKE

And now
Look:—the betrayer of his master! Now
The people—ah, you tremble!—they have made
A new word for *betray;* they say *raguse!*

Suddenly rising and advancing upon him.

Do not be silent at your accusation!
Answer me ! This is not Prince François-Charles,
It is Napoleon the Second who
Speaks to you!

MARMONT

Drawing back.

But somebody's coming! It
Is Metternich! I know his voice.

THE DUKE

Proudly showing the open door.

Well, then,
Betray us, if you like, a second time.

Arms folded, he defies him with a look. A pause.
Metternich comes back in with Prokesch.

METTERNICH

Crossing the back of the stage with Prokesch.

Pray don't disturb yourselves; just go on talking.
I'm taking Prokesch to the bottom of
The park, to see the Roman Ruin where
I have arranged a ball. They say that I
Am the last living representative
Of an old world that's dying,—so, of course,
I rather like to see them dancing on
The ruins. And tomorrow—

They go out. A pause.

MARMONT

Highness, I
Said nothing.

THE DUKE

That would have been perfect treason,
Your *ragusing* again, as you *ragused*
Before.

MARMONT

Taking a chair.

Oh, you may conjugate that verb
To taunt me; I'll—sit down.

THE DUKE

What!

MARMONT

I'll permit you
To conjugate that verb if you like, because
Just now you were superb!

THE DUKE

Sir!

MARMONT

So, I slandered
The Emperor?—Well, I always do! I have
For fifteen years: I drug myself with slander!
For, don't you see, the Duc de Raguse must always
Hope to find, somehow, an excuse! The truth
Is—that I never saw him again. If I
Had seen him afterward, I should have come
Back to him. Many other men betrayed him,
Thinking they served France by it, but they all
Saw him again. That made the difference. They
Were all recaptured by him,—and I've been
Recaptured that same way just now.

THE DUKE

Why?

MARMONT

Why,
Because I've just seen him again.

THE DUKE

Almost with a cry of joy.

Where?

MARMONT

Pointing to the duke.

There.
In the forehead, in the furious gesture, in
The flashing eye. Go on, insult me. I'll
Stay here.

THE DUKE

If only that is true, you've made
Some reparation. You've delivered me
From the self-distrust they foster in me. What!
Spite of my heavy brow, my narrow chest—

MARMONT

I have seen him again.

THE DUKE

I am filled with hope!
I wish I could forgive you.—Tell me, why
Did you betray him?

MARMONT

Ah, your highness!

THE DUKE

Why?

MARMONT

Oh—weariness!

A moment before, the upper door at the right has noiselessly opened a crack, and the footman who took away the wooden soldiers stands listening. At this, he comes in and closes the door quietly behind him, while Marmont goes on, in a burst of frankness.

Why, what can you expect?
All Europe leagued against us all the time!
To be a conqueror's all very well,
But still, to live's worth something too! Oh, always
Berlin, always Vienna—never Paris!
Everything always to begin again!
We would begin again twice, three times, and
—Oh, it was simply madness! Riding, night
And day, and never resting from the saddle!
Until at last we got too tired of it!

THE FOOTMAN

In a voice of thunder.

What about us?

MARMONT AND THE DUKE

Turning and seeing him with his arms folded.

What's that?

THE FOOTMAN

Coming down gradually toward Marmont.

What about us?
The common rank and file, obscure, unknown,
We who marched, wounded, bleeding, dirty, sick,
Who with no hope of dukedoms or rewards,
Marched always, never getting anywhere;
Too simple and too poor to have that famous
Field-marshal's baton in our knapsacks; we
Who marched and marched for years, sweating but not
With fear, and shivering but never trembling;
We who were only held up by the bugle,
By fever, and by our marching songs; we who
For seventeen years carried—think of it!—
Flint, sabre, musket, knapsack—not to speak
Of the provisions that we never had—
A trifling matter of eight-and-fifty pounds;
We who wore bearskins in the burning deserts,
And in the snow not even forage-caps;
Who ran from Spain to Austria and back;
Who sometimes had to take our feet in both
Our hands, and pull them up like carrots from
The heavy mud; who, as we had no syrups
To cure our coughs, would take foot-baths instead,
In the Danube; who, when some fine officer
Would gallop up and shout, "The enemy!
To arms!" had only time to gobble a bit
Of the white meat of a crow, or snatch a lump
Of snow and make a sherbet, with the blood
Of a dead horse; we who—

THE DUKE

Leaning forward, his hands gripping the arms of his chair, his eyes burning.

At last!

THE FOOTMAN

—At night
Were not afraid of bullets, but of waking
And finding ourselves cannibals; we who—

THE DUKE

Devouring the man with his eyes.

At last!

THE FOOTMAN

—Both marched and fought on empty stomachs
Stopped marching—

THE DUKE

Oh! At last! I have seen one!

THE FOOTMAN

Only to fight, and fighting one to four
Only to march, and marching but to fight;
Fighting and marching, marching and fighting, we,
Weak, wounded, ragged, filthy, hungry, gay—
What about us? Do you think that we were tired?

MARMONT

In stupefaction.

But—

THE FOOTMAN

We who didn't owe him anything,
Were faithful to him still! You dined with kings,

To the duke.

But we ate at that great canteen where it's

Your soul that's fed and glory that you eat!
His epaulette's not worth my sergeant's stripe!

MARMONT

Who is this footman talking like a soldier?

THE FOOTMAN

Coming to attention.

Jean-Pierre Séraphin Flambeau, nicknamed
"The Firebrand." Former sergeant-grenadier
Of the Emperor's volunteers. A Breton daddy,
A Picard mammy. Joined the army at
Fourteen, in the year VI of the Republic,
Second of Germinal. Baptism of fire
Was at Marengo. Given corporal's stripes
The fifteenth Fructidor, year XII. Silk stockings
And sergeant's staff—both wet with tears of joy—
July fourteenth, in eighteen nine—here—for
The guard was billeted in Sans-Souci
And Schoenbrunn! Total years spent in the service
Of His Most French Majesty, sixteen; campaigns,
Sixteen. Of battles, Eylau, Austerlitz,
Somo-Sierra, Eckmühl, Essling, Jena,
Wagram, Smolensk,—et cetera. Distinguished
Encounters, thirty-two. Wounds, one or two.
Fought just for glory, and the fun of it.

MARMONT

To the duke.

You cannot mean to hear him out like this?

THE DUKE

You're right. No, not like this,—but standing!

He rises.

MARMONT

Highness,
I—

THE DUKE

In the book of glorious deeds, you are
The capitals, you form the titles, and
You take the eye,—but all the little letters—
Ah, here is one of them! And you would be
Nothing without the humble army that
It takes to make a page of history!
Oh, brave Flambeau, painter of wooden soldiers,
To think that I have seen you for a month,
And only hated you for spying on me!

FLAMBEAU

Oh, we are older friends than that!

THE DUKE

Friends?

FLAMBEAU

Pushing his big honest face forward.

Does
Your highness not remember me?

THE DUKE

No, not
At all.

FLAMBEAU

A Thursday morning, in the park
Behind Saint-Cloud! A lady-in-waiting and
Marshal Duroc were with your highness. You
Were at your nurse's breast—it was so white

It took my breath away. The marshal called,
"Come here." I came. But I was bothered by
A lot of things—the imperial child, the big
Pink sleeves of the lady-in-waiting—the white breast—
So that the plume upon my bearskin shook.
It took your highness' eyes. You thought it over
Gravely. What was it? All at once you laughed,
A milky gurgle, and seemed to wonder what
It was about this moving redness that
You liked so much,—its redness, or the way
It moved. I bowed; then suddenly I felt
Your little hands were playing with my plume.
Marshal Duroc commanded very sternly,
"Allow his majesty!" And I allowed you.
I knelt upon the ground; I heard the marshal,
The lady, and the nana laugh; and when
I got up, all the grass was red, and I
Had nothing but a spike of iron for
A plume. "You shall have two plumes! I will sign
An order," said Duroc. And I went back
To quarters bursting with my happiness.
"Oho! Look there! Who's plucked that grenadier?"
Said the adjutant. I said, "The King of Rome!"
And that's how I became acquainted with
Your majesty. Your highness has grown since.

THE DUKE

No, I've not grown, and there's my trouble, since
His majesty is nothing but his highness.

MARMONT

Patronizingly.

And what have you done since the Empire fell?

FLAMBEAU

At least I've acted better than one

Remembering the duke.

B.

Knew Solignac and Fournier-Sarlovèze,
Plotted with Didier, May of eighteen sixteen;
Plot missed fire; see them execute Miard,
A fifteen-year-old boy, and old David,
A man of seventy. I mourn for them.
They sentence me to death for non-appearance
At trial. Good. I come back into Paris
Under a false name. On the pretext that
He stepped on me, I break a table on
A soldier of the king's guard. I preside
At fearful drinking-bouts in taverns. I
Spend sixty sous a month. I never cease
To hope the Other may come back some day.
I go out in an Empire fashion hat.
Whoever looks at me, I stare him down.
Fight thirty duels. Plot at Béziers. This
Plot misses fire. They sentence me to death
For non-appearance at my trial. Good.
I join another plot at Lyons. We're
Arrested in a body. I escape.
They sentence me to death for non-appearance
At trial. I go back to Paris, where,
By good luck, I was drawn into the plot
Of the bazar. Lefèvre-Desnouettes
Is in America; I join him there.
"What do we do now, general?" "We try
Again." Then, embarkation; shipwreck; and
As if he were a common traveller,
My general drowned. But I can swim, and I

Swim, weeping for Lefèvre-Desnouettes.
Well, very good. Sun, blue waves, gulls, a ship,
They pick me up; I disembark in time
To have a part in the conspiracy
Of Saumur. Misses fire. A special court
Without appeal. I scoot. Colonel Caron
Of the fifteenth regiment of the line is at
Toulon. I go to him. We plot. No good.
We talk too much. The whole thing misses fire.
They sentence me to death for non-appearance.
I go to Greece, to polish up my sword
Against the dirty Turks. We beat them. Then
I come back into France, one morning in
July. A crowd are throwing paving-stones.
I take a hand, and in the evening
The tricolor was waving once again,
Instead of the pale flag of Charles the Tenth!
But that tricolor wanted something yet,
To my taste—you know, something gold that flies.
So I go join a new plot, in Romagna,
Which misses fire. But then a cousin of yours—

THE DUKE
Eagerly.

Her name was?

FLAMBEAU

Camerata—takes me for
Her fencing-master—

THE DUKE

Ah!

FLAMBEAU

In Tuscany,
And while we fence or play at quarter-staff,

We plot. There is a post of danger here;
They give me some false papers: here I am!

He rubs his hands, laughs silently, and winks.

I'm here. But every day I see the countess.
And in the park I've found the hole your highness
Dug, when you were a little boy, to play
Robinson Crusoe. I hide there; it is
A passage with two exits; one is in
A nettle-bed, the other in an ant-hill.
I wait there in that hole; your cousin comes
Dressed like a tourist, with a sketch-book in
Her hands; among the Roman what-d'you-call-'ems,
She on a folding stool, I underground,
She sketching like an Englishwoman, I
Speaking from down there like a prompter, we
Talk over ways to make you emperor.

THE DUKE

For such a life of faithfulness, what will
You ask of me?

FLAMBEAU

To pull my ear.

THE DUKE

To—?

FLAMBEAU

Gaily.

Why,
What should you do for an old soldier?

THE DUKE

A little taken aback by his soldierly familiarity.

Old?

FLAMBEAU

I'm waiting! Come along! Your thumb and finger!

The duke pulls his ear awkwardly, and, in spite of himself, haughtily. Flambeau makes a face.

Oh, that's no way to pull an ear, your highness!
You don't know how; you're too much of a prince!

THE DUKE

Starting.

You think so?

MARMONT

Blunderer!

FLAMBEAU

But when the prince
Is French, it's not so bad.

THE DUKE

Anxiously.

But do they know
That I'm a French prince in this Austrian palace?

FLAMBEAU

Oh, yes. You don't belong here. This is heavy,
And overdone.

MARMONT

Well, well! Do you see that?

FLAMBEAU

My brother's an upholsterer in Paris.
He works for Fontaine and Percier. This room
Is imitation French. But they have got
A Louis Quinze—Lord, what a Louis Quinze!

I don't know very much, but I've got eyes.

He picks an armchair up like a feather, and indicating the heavy woodwork, carved and gilded in a German taste.

Look at that wood! All niggling, fussy carving!

He puts it down.

But the upholstery—eh? That has taste!
That's charming! That is perfect! Why? You know,
It's Gobelin! It was made by people who
Know how. There's taste. There's elegance. Just so
With you, your highness; you were made in France.

MARMONT

You must go back!

FLAMBEAU

And on the cross of the Legion
Of Honor, put another emperor!

THE DUKE

Who is there now?

FLAMBEAU

King Henry of Navarre.
You see, they had to get somebody who
Knew how to fight, but lord, the emperor
Would laugh, to have King Henry for a mask.
Have you ever seen the cross?

THE DUKE

Sadly.

Yes, in museums.

FLAMBEAU

Your highness, you must see it on men's breasts!
There, on the swelling cloth, a drop of blood
Seems to run down, and turn, in running down—

Gold and enamel, with a bit of green—
It's like a jewel running from a wound.

THE DUKE

It must be beautiful upon your breast.

FLAMBEAU

Mine?—I've not got the cross.

THE DUKE

You? Modest, great?
Not after what you've done?

FLAMBEAU

To get the cross,
You've got to do much more than that.

THE DUKE

And have
You not applied for it?

FLAMBEAU

When the Corporal does
Not give a thing, it means you don't deserve it.

THE DUKE

But I, a powerless, landless, crownless king,
The shadow of a ghost, the Duke of Reichstadt,
Who wanders all day in this Austrian park,
Carving upon the elms the letter N,
A wanderer no one would even look at,
But for his coughing; I who have not left
A ribbon of the scarlet watered silk
That lined, alas, my cradle; I on whose
Misfortune they have scattered stars in vain,
Who bear two crosses now instead of One;

I, exiled, ill, a prisoner—I cannot
Gallop before a splendid regiment
Showering stars on heroes—but I hope
—I dare to think—it seems to me—that I,
Son of a father who held firmaments
In his two hands,—in spite of all the shadow,
And all the yesterdays—that I must have
One little star left on my finger-tips.
Jean-Pierre Séraphin Flambeau, I give you
The Legion of Honor!

FLAMBEAU

You—?

THE DUKE

Ah, well! It is
Not the real ribbon.

FLAMBEAU

The real ribbon is
The one that makes weep when you receive it.
And—I have wept.

MARMONT

Besides, at Paris that
Can be arranged.

THE DUKE

What shall I do to get
To Paris?

FLAMBEAU

Do your things up!

THE DUKE

Eh?—Ah me!

FLAMBEAU

No more "Ah me's!" Let's see, today's the ninth;
If you would like to stand on the Pont-Neuf
Upon the thirtieth, come tomorrow night
—And on the thirtieth, see the Seine!—to the ball
Nepomucenus is arranging.

THE DUKE AND MARMONT

Who?

FLAMBEAU

Metternich. (Clemens Lothar Wenceslas
Nepomucenus.) Go to the ball, and then
No more "Ah me's."

MARMONT

You're talking very freely
Before me.

FLAMBEAU

Oh, you won't betray a plot
—That you've a part in!

THE DUKE

No! Not Marmont!

MARMONT

Yes!
I will take part in it!

To Flambeau.

But all the same,
You won't have caught me for a song! You had
To take me by a wild surprise-attack.

FLAMBEAU

It made me such a splendid entrance.

MARMONT

It
Was very rash.

FLAMBEAU

But it's a fault of mine
To do a little more than necessary,—
Always to go a bit beyond my orders,
Fight with a rosebud in my button-hole,
And give myself a bit of luxury.

MARMONT

Well, then, if Camerata will employ me—

THE DUKE

Not Marmont! No!

FLAMBEAU

Tara ta ta! Let him
Redeem himself.

THE DUKE

No!

MARMONT

To Flambeau.

I have secret lists
Of disaffected royalists, and of
Imperialists. Ambassador Maison
Is a friend of mine.

FLAMBEAU

Oh, he can help us!

THE DUKE

See,
Already compromises!—No! he must
Not crown desertion with desertion!

MARMONT

I'll
Obey you, duke—after the coronation.
I'll go and see Maison about it.

He goes out.

FLAMBEAU

Closing the door, and coming down again.

That
Old scoundrel is quite right.

THE DUKE

Walking up and down.

Good! I will go.
—But what's the proof—the proof that France still feels
Herself my father's widow? In all these years
Suppose their love for us has died.

FLAMBEAU

Their love
For you can never die!

He takes something long and tricolor from his pocket, waves it about his head, and gives it to the duke.

THE DUKE

What's this, Flambeau?

FLAMBEAU

That? Braces.

THE DUKE

Are you mad?

FLAMBEAU

Just see what's on them.

THE DUKE

My picture!

FLAMBEAU

Those are being worn now. They
Support your party.

THE DUKE

But, Flambeau—!

FLAMBEAU

Taking a snuff-box from his pocket.

Here! Have
A pinch?

THE DUKE

I—

FLAMBEAU

On the snuff-box is a head
—A curly head.

THE DUKE

It's I!

FLAMBEAU

Shaking out a big silk handkerchief.

What do you think
Of this blue handkerchief? Do you like the King
Of Rome in the middle?

He spreads it on the back of a chair.

THE DUKE

Why—

FLAMBEAU

Unfolding a poster.

A colored picture.
They stick it up on walls.

THE DUKE

It's I again,
Upon—

FLAMBEAU

A rearing horse. And how d'you like
This pipe?

THE DUKE

Recognizing himself in the bowl.

Why—why—Flambeau!

FLAMBEAU

Don't say you're not
Good looking!

THE DUKE

Half touched, half amused.

I—

FLAMBEAU

Continuing to take things out of his pockets.

Cockade! you put that on
To have it confiscated.

THE DUKE

What is that?

FLAMBEAU

Medallion. Pretty little thing.

THE DUKE

It's I!
It's always I!

FLAMBEAU

Always. And in this glass
What have they written?

He has taken a tumbler from his tail-pocket.

THE DUKE

"François, Duke of Reichstadt."

FLAMBEAU

Taking a painted plate from under his waistcoat.

Then we must have the plate, of course.

THE DUKE

The plate?

FLAMBEAU

Taking things out of his pockets as he names them, and arranging them on the table.

The knife. The napkin-ring. The egg-cup. Ah,
How sweet you look upon the egg-cup! There!

Drawing up a chair.

Dinner is served, your highness.

THE DUKE

Falling into the chair.

Oh, Flambeau!

FLAMBEAU

And everything! And pink cravats, on which
You are embroidered, crowned with wreaths and halos!
And packs of cards where you're the King of Hearts!

THE DUKE

In amazement at all the things that are raining down around him.

Flambeau!

FLAMBEAU

And almanacs!

THE DUKE

Flambeau! Flambeau!

FLAMBEAU

Everything! Everything!

THE DUKE

Bursting into tears.

Flambeau!

FLAMBEAU

Eh? You
Are crying? None of that!

He takes the bandanna from the chair.

Here, wipe
Your eyes upon the King of Rome!

He kneels by the duke and wipes his eyes.

I tell you
That you must strike now while the iron is hot;
That you have the people and the marshals; that
The king himself lives only on condition
Of being a Bonapartist; that it is
In vain that they have got a cock that tries
To look a little like the imperial eagle;
That Frenchmen cannot breathe inglorious air;
That a crown will never stay upon a cabbage;
That all the youth of France will follow you;
The street is trembling, and the pavement shakes,
—And Schoenbrunn's not so pretty as Versailles!

THE DUKE

Rising.

Yes, I accept—I will escape—

Military music is heard outside. The duke starts.

FLAMBEAU

That is
The guard. The emperor must be coming back.

THE DUKE

My grandfather! My promise!—No, before
Accepting, I—

FLAMBEAU

The deuce!

THE DUKE

—Must try to win him.
But when you come to guard my door tonight,
If you see something—that you have not seen
Before, here, that will mean that I will go!

FLAMBEAU

Like a Parisian street-boy.

Hoop la! What'll it be?

THE DUKE

You'll see.

FLAMBEAU

Yes, but—

The door opens. He quickly moves away from the duke. An officer of the Hungarian guard of honor appears. He is in red and silver, with yellow boots, a panther-skin over his shoulder, and a fur bonnet with a long white plume set in silver.

THE OFFICER

Your highness—

FLAMBEAU

Aside.

What fine plumes the rascals have!

THE DUKE

What is it?

THE OFFICER

The emperor has come back. Some one
Reminded him, "Today, sire, is the day
Your majesty receives your subjects. Many
Have come a long way." "Yes, I know," replied
The good old emperor, "and I look forward
To seeing them. I'm here at Schoenbrunn just
As a grandfather; I'll be with the duke
From five to six; so let my other children
Come see me with grandson." Highness, may
They all come here?

THE DUKE

Yes! Open all the doors!

The officer goes out. The music of the guard is heard in the park until the end of the act.

Now, make a bundle of these things. I'll look
At them again, at leisure, in my room.

FLAMBEAU

I'll do them up in the bandanna. But
Do tell me what the signal's going to be.

THE DUKE

It will be something that you can't mistake.
—Do you hear them playing the Austrian air, down there?

FLAMBEAU

Tying the corners of the handkerchief.

Plague on it, that's not worth the Marseillaise.

THE DUKE

The Marseillaise! Ah!—Finished?—Yes, my father
Would say, sometimes, "That tune has got a beard!"

FLAMBEAU

The Austrian tune has got a waxed goatee.

THE DUKE

The duke, taking a sabre from the console-table, hanging the bundle on it, and putting it over his shoulder.

It wouldn't be so bad to go to France,
Afoot, your bundle on your shoulder, so!

He goes toward his room, mimicking the awkward gait of a raw recruit, the blue handle bobbing behind him.

FLAMBEAU

Looking at him with rough tenderness.

Well, what a pretty boy you are! And what
A merry lad! Why, I have never seen
You so before.

THE DUKE

Turning at the door of his room.

You mean—a little young?
A little gay? That's true, Flambeau. Thank you!

CURTAIN

ACT III

SPREADING WINGS

The same scene.

The open window shows the park in the rich colors of twilight. The Gloriette is gold against the evening sky.

The big table has been pushed to one side to leave the middle of the room empty; there has been brought in, not a throne, but a huge arm-chair, so that the old emperor may be at once majestic and paternal.

At the rise of the curtain, the petitioners have been shown in. They are waiting, standing and talking in undertones. Each one has in his hand a little paper on which his request is written. Burghers in their Sunday clothes, soldiers' widows in mourning. Peasants from all over the empire. Tyroleans, Bohemians, etc. Many-colored display of local costumes.

Archers, a little like the Swiss guards of the church (beribboned red coat with cuffs and belt of black velvet, white breeches, high boots, cocked hats half covered with cock-feathers), are standing motionless at the doors right. An officer of the Hungarian guard of honor is striding up and down flinging his cloak about.

He makes them all go back to the window and left against the closed doors of the duke's room.

THE OFFICER

Form line! Quiet, old man! You, little one,
Be good!

Indicating the upper door at the right.

The emperor will come through there.
Now leave him room. You mountaineer, don't scrape
Your feet!

A MAN

Timidly.

He'll pass before us?

THE OFFICER

Yes, and take
Your papers. Hold your little papers out
Where he can see them. H'm! And do not tell
Him any stories!
—Oh! And it's forbidden
To kneel when he comes in.

A WOMAN

Aside.

Forbidden! That
Won't hinder—

The door opens. The emperor appears. All the people fall on their knees.

THE EMPEROR

Very simply.

Rise, my children.

He comes down. He has the long sad face of his portraits, but a great air of kindness. He is dressed with intentional simplicity in the middle-class costume he affects: gray frock-coat, straw-colored waistcoat, gray trousers tucked into his boots. He takes the petition a woman holds out to him, reads it, and gives it to the chamberlain who follows him, saying.

Pension doubled.

THE WOMAN

Curtseying to the ground.

Oh, sire!

THE EMPEROR

Reading another petition.

Oho! Two oxen? That comes dear!

Giving the paper to the chamberlain.

Well, granted.

THE PEASANT

Father!

THE EMPEROR

The emperor, reading a peasant-woman's petition and giving it to the chamberlain.

Granted.

THE PEASANT-WOMAN

Blessing him.

Father Franz!

THE EMPEROR

To a poor man.

You here again? Are things all going well
At home?

THE MAN

Turning his cap in his hands.

Not badly.

THE EMPEROR

After giving his petition to the chamberlain, comes to the next.

Well, old woman, well?

THE OLD WOMAN

As the emperor reads her petition.

You know, the cold killed all my hens—

THE EMPEROR

Giving the petition to the chamberlain.

All right!

He takes a petition from a Tyrolean, and, after reading it.

A singer?

THE TYROLEAN

I can yodel.

THE EMPEROR

Oh, you yodel?
Well, come to Baden, sing to us tomorrow.

THE CHAMBERLAIN

Name?

THE TYROLEAN

Eagerly.

Schnauser.

THE EMPEROR

Before a lanky, barelegged giant.

You're a mountaineer?

THE MOUNTAINEER

I live
On that blue mountain you can see from here
Against the sky. The great dream of my life
Has been to be a cabman in Vienna.

THE EMPEROR

Shrugging his shoulders.

All right, you shall be.

He gives the petition to the chamberlain, takes another from a fat countryman, and reads.

H'm! "A wealthy farmer
Would have Franz gain him back his daughter's heart,
Which a Bohemian has stolen—" You
Marry your daughter to the man she loves.

THE FARMER

But—

THE EMPEROR

I'll give her a dowry.

THE CHAMBERLAIN

Taking a note.

Name?

THE FARMER

Johannes
Schmoll.—Sire, I kiss your hands.

THE EMPEROR

Reading a paper he has taken from a young man wrapped in a great cloak, who stands bowing deeply.

"A shepherd of
The Tyrol, orphaned, friendless, dispossessed
And driven from his acres by the herdsmen
Who were his father's enemies, longs to see
His sky, his woodland"—Very touching!—"and
His father's field." We'll give him back his field.

He gives the petition to the chamberlain.

THE CHAMBERLAIN

Name of the shepherd who would have our help?

THE SHEPHERD

Drawing himself up.

The Duke of Reichstadt, and the field is France!

He throws back his cloak and the white uniform appears. A stir, then frightened silence.

THE EMPEROR

Curtly.

Leave us.

The officers hurriedly show every one out. The doors close. Grandfather and grandson are alone.

THE EMPEROR

In a voice trembling with anger.

What's this?

THE DUKE

Standing motionless, his little Tyrolean cap in hand.

Then, sire, you see yourself
If I were nothing but a mountaineer,
A huntsman or a herdsman, with no more
To take your notice than a feather stuck
In my green hat, you would have thrown yourself
Upon my dazzled heart.

THE EMPEROR

But, Franz—

THE DUKE

I know
That all your subjects, all the unfortunate
Can always call themselves your sons, as much
As we. But is it just, sire, is it just
That I, when I, too, am unfortunate,
Should be your son less than the least of these?

THE EMPEROR

But I must scold you, sir! Why did you come
And speak to me when I was busy with
Those people, and not privately?

THE DUKE

To take
You when your heart was open.

THE EMPEROR

Heart! My heart!
Sir, do you know that you are impudent?

THE DUKE

I know you can do everything I ask,
That I am helpless and unfortunate,
That you're my grandfather—and that is all!

THE EMPEROR

But there is Europe! There is England! There
Is Metternich!

THE DUKE

You are my grandfather.

THE EMPEROR

But you don't know how difficult it is—

THE DUKE

I am the grandson of your majesty.

THE EMPEROR

But—

THE DUKE

Coming nearer.

Sire, you are my only hope; you have,
Surely, a right to be a grandfather
Sometimes, sire?

THE EMPEROR

Yes—but—

THE DUKE

Nearer still.

Grandfather, you might
For just a moment, not be emperor?

THE EMPEROR

You always were a coaxing wheedler!

THE DUKE

I

Don't like you when you're like your portrait in
The Grand Saloon—dressed in your robes of state,
The Golden Fleece about your neck;

Coming still nearer.

but now,
Like this, I love you so! Your silver hair,
Your kindly eyes, your long gray coat,—as if
You were just an indulgent grandpapa,
—Who'd sometimes spoil me!

THE EMPEROR

Growling.

Spoil you!

THE DUKE

Kneeling at his feet.

Would you mind
If you never saw King Louis-Philippe upon
The French coins, pouting out his lip?

THE EMPEROR

Trying not to smile.

Tut, tut!

THE DUKE

Are you so fond of those decrepit Bourbons?

THE EMPEROR

Pensively, caressing his hair.

You are not like the rest of the archdukes.

THE DUKE

You think so?

THE EMPEROR

All these pretty ways of yours
Aren't Austrian! Where did you learn them?

THE DUKE

As
A child I played about the Tuileries.

THE EMPEROR

Shaking his finger at him.

You're coming back to that?

THE DUKE

I wish I might
Come back to that.

THE EMPEROR

Can you remember it?

THE DUKE

Yes—vaguely—

THE EMPEROR

After a moment's hesitation.

And your father?

THE DUKE

I remember
A man who pressed me very hard against
A star upon his breast. And as he held
Me so tight that I cried with fear, I felt
The star of diamonds go into my heart.

Rising, and proudly.

Sire, it is there still.

THE EMPEROR

Giving him his hand.

Can I blame you for it?

THE DUKE

Yes, let your tenderness speak out! When I
Was little, then you loved me, didn't you?
You used to take your meals with me. We dined
Together, all alone—

THE EMPEROR

Dreamily.

It was delightful.

THE DUKE

My hair was long then. I was Prince of Parma.

He sits on the arm of the chair.

And when they punished me, you let me off.

THE EMPEROR

Do you remember how you hated ponies?

THE DUKE

Once, when they showed me one, as white as snow,
I stamped with rage, there in the riding-school.

THE EMPEROR

You ride a pony! You were furious!

THE DUKE

I stamped and cried, "I want a great, big horse!"

THE EMPEROR

Yes, now you want another great, big horse.

THE DUKE

And when I beat my German nurses!

THE EMPEROR

And
Without a "By-your-leave," you used to dig
Holes in my park, sir!

THE DUKE

Playing Crusoe.

THE EMPEROR

Growling.

You
Were Crusoe!

THE DUKE

I would hide in them. I had
A gun, two axes and three bows.

THE EMPEROR

And then
You used to guard my door.

THE DUKE

As a hussar.

THE EMPEROR

While that went on, the ladies all were late,
And would excuse themselves with "Pardon, sire,
I stopped to kiss the sentinel."

THE DUKE

You loved
Me then.

THE EMPEROR

I love you still.

THE DUKE

Slipping into his grandfather's lap.

Prove it to me!

THE EMPEROR

My Franz, my little grandson!

THE DUKE

Is it true
That if I should appear, the king would have
Nothing left for it but to disappear?

THE EMPEROR

Why—

THE DUKE

Tell the truth!

THE EMPEROR

I—

THE DUKE

Putting a finger on the emperor's lips.

Do not fib!

THE EMPEROR

Perhaps!

THE DUKE

I love you!

THE EMPEROR

Well—yes. If you should appear
Upon the bridge at Strassburg, all alone,
Without a single trumpet, why, it would
Be all up with the king!

THE DUKE

Throwing his arms around him.

Grandfather, I
Adore you!

THE EMPEROR

But you smother me!

THE DUKE

Oh, no!

THE EMPEROR

Laughing and struggling.

I oughtn't to have told you.

THE DUKE

Very gravely.

And besides,
Vienna is unhealthy for my cough.
I'm ordered Paris.

THE EMPEROR

Really?

THE DUKE

Yes, the air
Is milder. And if I'm to greet the spring
In Paris, I could not stop anywhere,
Of course, except the Louvre.

THE EMPEROR

Aha!

THE DUKE

Oh, if
You would—

THE EMPEROR

Indeed, it's been proposed to us
To let you go—

THE DUKE

Oh, do it, do it!

THE EMPEROR

I'd
Be willing—

THE DUKE

And you can!

THE EMPEROR

What stops me is—

THE DUKE

Don't have thoughts at the bottom of your mind;
Have feelings, from the bottom of your heart.
Think, if an emperor should overturn
History just to spoil his child! And then
It's something, and it's rather splendid, too,
To say sometimes—oh, very carelessly!—
"My grandson, Emperor of the French, you know!"

THE EMPEROR

Indeed—

THE DUKE

You'll say it! Say that you will say it!

THE EMPEROR

Well, well, but—

THE DUKE

Pleading.

Sire!

THE EMPEROR

Yielding and opening his arms.

Yes, sire!

THE DUKE

With a cry of joy.

Oh, sire!

THE EMPEROR

Sire!

THE DUKE

Sire!

They are in each other's arms, laughing and crying together. The door opens. Metternich appears. He is magnificently dressed in a green coat embroidered in gold, knee-breeches and white stockings, and is wearing the Order of the Golden Fleece. He stands motionless a moment, looking with a ministerial eye at this family group.

THE EMPEROR

Quickly, to the duke.

Metternich!

Grandfather and grandson move apart, as if caught in a fault.

THE EMPEROR

Have no fear.

He rises, and, laying a hand on the hair of the duke, who is still kneeling, he says to Metternich in a voice that he tries to make firm.

It is my will

That—

THE DUKE

Aside.

All is lost!

THE EMPEROR

More strongly and majestically.

It is my will this child
Shall reign.

METTERNICH

With a deep bow.

Certainly, sire. Prince, I will join
Your party—

THE DUKE

But I feared—

THE EMPEROR

A little astonished also, but drawing himself up proudly.

What? I am master!

THE DUKE

Whom will you send me as ambassador?

METTERNICH

Coming down.

Certainly—

THE EMPEROR

You will come to see me, as
An emperor?

THE DUKE

Yes,—when affairs of state
Permit it.

METTERNICH

Standing motionless by the table right.

We will only ask for one
Or two small guarantees.

THE DUKE

Oh, anything
You wish!

THE EMPEROR

Sitting down again.

Now are you happy?

METTERNICH

Carelessly.

First let us
Agree on matters of detail. I think
You'll have some gatherings to break up; we can't
Have friends who foster thunderbolts, you know!

THE DUKE

Who is hardly listening.

Dear grandfather!

METTERNICH

Ah! And then—we're a bit
Tired of your heroes of July.

THE DUKE

But—I—

METTERNICH

Liberalism and imperialism
Being connected—we must cut the isthmus;
Fear the new spirit; banish Lamennais—

THE DUKE

Drawing back a pace.

But—

METTERNICH

And Chateaubriand. H'm,—Ah! And then
Make up your mind to muzzle your free press—

THE DUKE

Oh, that's not needed!

THE EMPEROR

Yes, indeed, it is!

THE DUKE

Taking another step back.

But, with your majesty's good leave, it is
A wound to liberty.

THE EMPEROR

Furiously.

Eh? Liberty?

METTERNICH

Ah! and then—leave us free hands in Bologna.
Ah! and then—calm yourselves concerning Poland.

THE DUKE

Ah!—and then?

METTERNICH

Then we will take up the matter
Of those French dukes whose titles are the names
Of battles—

To the emperor, with an air of condolence.

—battles, sire, that you—well—lost.
Your generals must give those titles up.

THE DUKE

Haughtily.

I beg your pardon?

THE EMPEROR

Oh, perhaps—

METTERNICH

I beg
Your pardon, but those people must be mad,
To call themselves the lords of places that
Are yours; and you cannot approve this way
Of bearing off our villages to France.

THE DUKE

Grandfather! Grandfather!

THE EMPEROR

His head sinking.

It's true, of course—

THE DUKE

And just now we were in each other's arms!
—Well, have you any more demands to make?

METTERNICH

Yes. The suppression of the tricolor.

THE DUKE

Taking one or two slow steps to Metternich, after a pause.

Your excellence would have me wash that flag
Colored with blood below, and heaven above,
—For it was dragged through bloody teeming depths
And bathed in all the hopes of all the world—
Your excellence would have me wash away
That stain of blood, that stain of heaven, and
Leave nothing but a white, ignoble cloth?
Offer that bit of rag to Liberty?

THE EMPEROR

Angrily.

Eh? Liberty again?

THE DUKE

I am descended
From Liberty, sire, on my father's side.

METTERNICH

Oh, yes, I was forgetting; he has that
Absurd Directory for grandfather.

THE DUKE

And the French Revolution for grandmother!

THE EMPEROR

Springing to his feet.

You dare—!

METTERNICH

The emperor-republican!
Utopia for you! Play the Marseillaise
In A upon the brasses, while the flutes
Sigh "God preserve the Empire" in E flat.

THE DUKE

Those tunes together make a harmony
That has made kings run for their lives, remember!

THE EMPEROR

This to my face? You dare to say—! He dares!

THE DUKE

I see now what you offer me!

THE EMPEROR

But what
Has caused this sudden fury?

THE DUKE

It's to be
An Austrian archduke on the French throne!

THE EMPEROR

Raising trembling hands.

But what can he have read? What has he seen?

THE DUKE

I have seen egg-cups, handkerchiefs and pipes!

THE EMPEROR

He's mad, stark mad! The duke is raving!

THE DUKE

Mad
To have thought that you would help me to return!

METTERNICH

Return? It is your highness that prevents it.

THE DUKE

You offer me, instead of transport-wagons,
A carriage.

THE EMPEROR

No! No longer even that!
We offer nothing now!

THE DUKE

Folding his arms.

A cage?

THE EMPEROR

Perhaps.

THE DUKE

I am the Eaglet! That you cannot steal!

THE EMPEROR

The Hapsburg eagle has a thousand eaglets
And you are one of them, and nothing more!

THE DUKE

Black eagle, cruel eagle with two heads,
Eagle of Austria, grim bird of night,
A golden eagle of the day has flown
Above your eyry, bird of the black past,
And, fluttering with rage and fear, you see
One of your eaglets growing plumes of gold!

THE EMPEROR

To think that I relented—that I even
Shed tears!—These books and arms shall all
Be taken from you.

Calling.

Dietrichstein!

METTERNICH

He is
Not in the palace.

It grows darker. The park turns violet, the sky behind the Gloriette red.

THE EMPEROR

We must take away
From you—poor child, you are too nervous—all
That can remind you of your father.

THE DUKE

Well,
Then drive out all the bees, and root up all
The violets in the park!

THE EMPEROR

To Metternich.

Change all his servants!

METTERNICH

I'll send away Mark, Hermann, Albrecht, Otto,
And Gottlieb.

THE DUKE

Draw the shade; that star might speak
To me of his!

THE EMPEROR

I must give Dietrichstein
Some fresh instructions.

To Metternich.

Write!

METTERNICH

Seating himself at the table and looking for writing materials.

The inkstand?

THE DUKE

Mine
Is on the table; you've my leave to use it.

METTERNICH

Where? I don't see it.

THE DUKE

The Minerva's head,
Bronze and green marble.

METTERNICH

But I don't see—

THE DUKE

Pointing to the console-table at the right, the one on which there is nothing.

Then
Take the other, over there, the one inlaid
With gold, in the big writing case!

METTERNICH

Feeling the bare marble of the table.

What? Where?

THE EMPEROR

Anxiously.

What inkstands?

THE DUKE

Sire, those that my father left
To me.

THE EMPEROR

What do you mean?

THE DUKE

Yes, in his will,

Pointing again to the empty table.

And those four pistols—the four pistols from
Versailles—take those away!

THE EMPEROR

Striking the table.

Come, sir!

THE DUKE

Don't strike
The table in your anger; you've knocked down
The sword, the symbol of his consulship.

THE EMPEROR

I don't see all these things.

THE DUKE

They all are here.
"To give my son when he has reached sixteen."
You've given me nothing; but despite the shameful
Command that keeps them back, I have them all.
I have their soul, the soul of every cross
And every jewel! Everything is there:
I've the three boxes of mahogany,
I've all the snuff-boxes and all the spurs,
The garter-buckles, the shoe-buckles; I
Have everything; I have his three state swords,
The sword of iron, the sword of silver-gilt,
And the sword in which his own immortal sun
Has left its fires imprisoned, that a man
Might fear to draw lest he bring forth the sun!
I have the sword-belts, all the six—

THE EMPEROR

Be silent!

THE DUKE

"To give my son when he has reached sixteen."
Father, sleep sound, for I have everything,
Even your uniforms. My uniform
Seems white? Well, that's not true; that's all pretense.

Striking his arms, shoulders and chest.

Now, do you see it's blue, it's scarlet? Look!
A colonel? No! Lieutenant in your Guard!
I drink from the three cups your soldiers bore!
Father who gave me victories for sisters,
You have your wish that I should have the clock

Of Frederick of Prussia, that you so
Magnificently stole from Potsdam; for
It's here! Its tick-tock is the beating of
My fevered pulse. I have it! And its stroke
Wakes me each morning, sends me, weary with
My work of the night before, to work again,
Work at my narrow table, work, that I
May be more fit each evening to reign.

THE EMPEROR

To reign? To reign? Have no more hope that you
Can ever reign in France, son of an upstart,
Because your share of our blood makes you look
A bit more like a king than your late father.

THE DUKE

But by your leave, at Dresden, (as I think
You know) you all looked like the footmen of
My father.

THE EMPEROR

Of that soldier? That—!

THE DUKE

For fear
That he might choose to ask it, emperors
Once gave their daughter to that soldier!

THE EMPEROR

With the movements of a man struggling with a nightmare.

Well,
It may be so—I cannot say—I do
Not know—My daughter is a widow!

THE DUKE

What
A pity I am still here, I, the proof!

For a moment they stare at each other as mortal foes.

THE EMPEROR

Suddenly, with a cry of regret.

Oh, Franz, remember how we loved each other!

THE DUKE

No, no! While I am here, it means that you
Were beaten, and you cannot help but hate me,
Since I am Wagram, living and before you!

He strides about the room.

THE EMPEROR

Out of my sight! Go!

The duke goes into his bedroom.

THE EMPEROR

Falling into a chair.

Oh, the child I loved.

METTERNICH

Is it your wish that he should reign, sire?

THE EMPEROR

Never!

METTERNICH

You see what, without me, you would have done?

THE EMPEROR

You heard what he said to his grandfather?

METTERNICH

His spirit must be broken.

THE EMPEROR

For his good.

METTERNICH

For the peace of Europe, and your peace of mind.

THE EMPEROR

It must be.

METTERNICH

I will come and talk to him
Tonight.

THE EMPEROR

In the broken voice of an old man.

How he hurts me!

METTERNICH

Giving him his arm.

Come.

THE EMPEROR

Leaning heavily on his stick.

Yes—yes—
Tonight.

METTERNICH

That scene must never be repeated.

THE EMPEROR

It hurt me.—Oh, that child who—

METTERNICH

Come.

They go out.

THE EMPEROR

Is heard outside, repeating plaintively and mechanically.

That child—

Then silence. It is quite dark. The dark is deep blue. The moonlight falls on the balcony. The duke comes in softly, holding something behind his back. He looks to see if the emperor and Metternich are gone, and listens for a moment; the palace is quiet; from the park comes only a faint sound of Austrian military music, as retreat is played, growing fainter among the trees. The duke shows what he is holding: a little Napoleonic hat. He carries it religiously before him to the table, and places it with decision on a great half-unrolled map of Europe.

THE DUKE

The signal.

The bugle-calls die away in the distance. The duke goes back to his bedchamber. Behind him the moonlight creeps into the room, filling it with its own mystery, glides to the table and suddenly illuminates it. Against the shining whiteness of the map, the little hat is very black.

FLAMBEAU

Coming in at the right, and looking round.

Are you here? It's time. Perhaps.
"It will be something that you can't mistake."
H'm! Is it high or low? And black or white?
And great or small?

Seeing the hat.

Aha! The—

He salutes.

Small and great!
The countess will be waiting in the park;
And if the signal's here, I am to make
A sign—

He takes his handkerchief from his pocket.

Oh, no! A white flag makes her ill.

A servant enters with a reading-lamp, which he carries toward the duke's room.

THE SERVANT

His highness' study lamp.

FLAMBEAU

Seizing it.

You idiot!
It's smoking! It must have fresh air. Look here!

He steps out on the balcony.

You move it up and down three times, and fix
The wick—so. That'll do it. Do you see?

THE SERVANT

Taking the lamp.

There's nothing much to that.

FLAMBEAU

Oh, yes, there is.

The servant goes into the duke's bedroom. Flambeau bows to the hat.

Everything shall be ready for tomorrow.

SEDLINSKY

Coming in back right.

The duke?

FLAMBEAU

Pointing to the bedroom.

In there.

SEDLINSKY

Watch here.—A post of trust,
You know.

FLAMBEAU

Oh, yes.

SEDLINSKY

Show yourself worthy of it.
You are the Piedmontese? You know the orders?

FLAMBEAU

Be here each night. I'm here.

SEDLINSKY

What do you do?

FLAMBEAU

When everything is quiet in the palace,
I lock and double-lock those doors,

Indicating the doors at the right.

and take
The keys out.

SEDLINSKY

Good. You always keep these keys
Upon you?

FLAMBEAU

Always.

SEDLINSKY

And you don't sleep?

FLAMBEAU

Never.

SEDLINSKY

You mount guard?

FLAMBEAU

Pointing to the duke's door.

There.

The servant has come out of the duke's room and goes out at the right.

SEDLINSKY

It's time now. Lock the door.

FLAMBEAU

Locking the lower door.

It's locked.

SEDLINSKY

Take out the key.

FLAMBEAU

It's out.

SEDLINSKY

Going out by the upper door.

No one
Except the emperor has these keys. Now, watch.

FLAMBEAU

Locking the door behind him, with a smile.

The way I always do!—Now, for the night
I'll close the eyelids of the keyholes—so.

He pushes down the bit of metal that covers the keyholes, and begins to undo the coat of his livery.

SEDLINSKY'S VOICE

You Piedmontese, good-night!

Flambeau starts, and instinctively pulls his coat together again. Then, after a glance at the locked doors, he shrugs his shoulders, and replies, pulling off his coat.

Good-night, my lord.

He appears in his sleeved livery-waistcoat of plush and galloon. He is already slimmer, and now he begins to undo his waistcoat.

SEDLINSKY'S VOICE

Mount guard, you know.

FLAMBEAU

Proudly, stripping off the waistcoat that had padded him out.

I'm mounting guard.

He appears lean and sinewy in his old blue grenadier's coat; the white breeches and stockings complete the uniform of a French grenadier of the Guard.

SEDLINSKY'S VOICE

Farther off.

All right.

Good-night.

FLAMBEAU

Good-night.

Throwing back his shoulders, he seems to grow a foot taller. He shakes out his uniform, pulls down his chevroned sleeves, raises his epaulettes; runs his fingers through his powdered hair and shakes it out into the old campaigner's mop; goes over to the console-table with the trophy of arms upon it, buckles on the sword-belt, puts on the bearskin busby, and shoulders the musket; stands before the cheval-glass for a moment, twisting his moustaches soldier-fashion; takes two strides to the duke's door, and comes to the carry arms.

And now, this is the way,
Stripped of his livery, erect and lean,
Locked in till daybreak, safe against surprise,
Knitting his grizzled brows beneath his busby,
And standing straight in his old uniform,
Gun at the carry, hand against his breast
In the old regulation attitude—
Standing upon your threshold every night
Guarding the son as once he did the father,
Acting on his own orders, proud to do
A great deed, a great joke—this is the way
A grenadier of France mounts guard at Schoenbrunn!

He walks back and forth, in the moonlight, before the duke's door.

Tonight is the last time. You'll never know.
It's just for me. That is real luxury!
To do a thing, not to make people stare,
But just to say to yourself "That's pretty good."
Under their nose! At Schoenbrunn!—I am mad!
But I am glad! I'm happy!

A key turns in a lock.

I am pinched!

He springs out of the moonlight into the shadow at left.

Who's got the key?

METTERNICH

Coming in with a large candelabrum.

That scene must never be
Repeated—no.

FLAMBEAU

Aside.

Nepomucenus!

METTERNICH

Yes,
I'll speak to him—tonight—when there's no chance
Of interference—

Setting the candelabrum down, and seeing the little hat.

Well! I didn't know
The duke had one.

Smiling.

It must be the archduchess
Who's smuggled in this little keepsake to him.
—So there you are, the legendary hat!
It's been a long time since—

With a patronizing bow.

How do you do?
What did you say? I beg your pardon?—No!
Twelve years of splendor look at me in vain
From the summit of your little pyramid.
I do not fear you now. Ah, here's the bit
Of leather that was used to keep your shape
When he would lift you all the time, to be
Applauded for it.—Little hat, with which
He fanned himself at each new conquest, you
Who couldn't tumble from his careless hand
Without a king springing to pick you up,
Today you're nothing but a hand-me-down.
If I should throw you out of the window, where
Would you land, old cocked hat?

FLAMBEAU
Aside.

In a museum.

METTERNICH

The famous little hat! Look at it! What
An ugly thing it is.—They call it little,
But is it? No, it's big; it's very big,
Enormous; it's the thing a little man
Put on to make himself look bigger, for
The Legend started with a hatter, and
The real Napoleon was

Looking at the maker's name.

named Poupart.
—Ah, do not think my hate has gone to sleep!
I hated you first for your shape, black hat,
Bat of the battlefield, dark raven's-wings!
For the triumphant figures that you cut

Against the heavens over our defeats,
Half-circle that seemed, against the blood-red field,
The rising disk of some black, nightmare sun!
And for your lining where the devil perches,
You juggler's hat that dropped upon a throne,
An army, a whole people, and were lifted,
And presto, they'd been spirited away!
For your insufferable insolence;
For your simplicity—a shallow pose,—
Your joy in being just an impudent piece
Of beaver among all the golden crowns;
And for the headstrong, peremptory hand
That lifted you to dash you to the ground;
And for my ten years' nightmares that you filled;
And for the bows I've given you, the smiles;
And for the way that, when I stooped to trying
To flatter you, you stayed upon his head!
New, conquering, acclaimed, I hated you;
I hate you still, old, conquered, and betrayed!
I hate you for the sharp black shadow you
Will always cast on history's white wall.
I hate you for your jacobin cockade
That stares at me like a great bloodshot eye;
I hate you for the murmurs in your shell,
Black sea-shell left by the retreating waves,
Where one may hear the roaring of the sea,
The beat of a great people on the march!
For that French pride that you've made boundless, hat,
Cocked hat that trampled on us cock-a-hoop!
I hate you for Raffet and Béranger,
For all the pictures and the war-songs, and
The halo Saint Helena's given you!
I hate you, hate you! I shall never rest

Until your cheap and clumsy pattern, stripped
Of all its legends, has become again
In France what it should never have ceased to be,
The helmet of a village constable!
I hate—

He stops, a little disturbed by the silence, the time, the place.

but suddenly—how curious!
—The present sometimes imitates the past,
To laugh at us. Seeing you lying there,—
It takes me twenty years into the past;
He always laid you there, like that, when he
Occupied Schoenbrunn, twenty years ago!
This was his antechamber; it was here,
Waiting for him to come from his bed-chamber,
Dukes, princes, noblemen of Hungary,
All crowded in a corner, looked at you
With humbled eyes, from a respectful distance,
Like lions, watching, between fear and fury,
The lion-tamer's hat left in the cage!
He laid you there, like that; it was just as
It is tonight,—arms—papers—you would think
That he himself had tossed you on that map;
That Bonaparte was still at home in Schoenbrunn,
And that if I should turn around, before
His door, I'd see the grenadier mount—

Turning, he sees Flambeau, who has stepped back into the moonlight.

Ha!
No. No. No. I am feverish. My chat
With the old hat has made me see things.

He moves toward Flambeau. Flambeau stands motionless, mounting guard.

Can
The moon have made a spectre out of moonbeams?

Or what is that?—Let's see! Let's see! Let's see!

Going angrily toward Flambeau.

Well—who's the joker?

FLAMBEAU

Presenting his bayonet.

Who goes there?

METTERNICH

The devil!

FLAMBEAU

Go to hell.

METTERNICH

Trying to pass.

Yes, yes, a clever jest,

But—

FLAMBEAU

Presenting his bayonet.

Who goes there?

METTERNICH

Drawing back.

Oh, quite amusing!

FLAMBEAU

One

More step, and you're a dead man.

METTERNICH

But I—

FLAMBEAU

Quiet!

METTERNICH

I—let me pass!

FLAMBEAU

Quiet. The Emperor is
Asleep.

METTERNICH

What!

FLAMBEAU

Hush!

METTERNICH

But I'm the chancellor
Of Austria! But I am everything!
I can do everything! I—

FLAMBEAU

That for you!

METTERNICH

I wish to see the Duke of Reichstadt!

FLAMBEAU

Huh?

METTERNICH

What's that?

FLAMBEAU

Reichstadt? Who ever heard of Reichstadt?
Auerstaedt, Elchingen, they're dukes all right,
Reichstadt's no duke, Reichstadt's no victory.

METTERNICH

See here, we are at Schoenbrunn!

FLAMBEAU

Very well,
Suppose we are? Thanks to our new success
We're quartered here. We're feeding up a bit,
And then we'll give the world another licking.

METTERNICH

What's that? A new success, you say?

FLAMBEAU

Yes, ass!

METTERNICH

This is July tenth, eighteen hundred—

FLAMBEAU

Nine!

METTERNICH

Can I be mad?

FLAMBEAU

And where have you come from?
This is suspicious! Why aren't you in bed?

METTERNICH

Drawing himself up.

I?

FLAMBEAU

Who has let you pass? The Mameluke?
He took that in his—turban?

METTERNICH

Mameluke?

FLAMBEAU

So, everything is going to the dogs?

METTERNICH

But—

FLAMBEAU

You in the great anteroom at night!

METTERNICH

But I—

FLAMBEAU

You cross the Rosa drawing-room
And never see the sentinel on duty?

METTERNICH

The sent—?

FLAMBEAU

You wander through the small rotunda,
You have the cheek—! Was there no yataghan
To shave it for you? In the white saloon
Were there no sergeants brewing punch and tea
Upon the golden stove? You didn't meet
Any old war-dogs in the marble room,
The porcelain room? And so the brigadiers
Thought it quite natural you should take a stroll
Along the galleries? This means a man
Can cross the oval cabinet and not
Be eaten by the Marshal of the Palace?

METTERNICH

Recognizing with growing alarm this flood of details he has good cause to know.

The marshal?

FLAMBEAU

So the watchdog is a lapdog?

METTERNICH

I—

FLAMBEAU

So, the palace is a public house?
And when you'd passed through all the drawing-rooms?
Was there nobody here? The door-keeper?
Sick? And the valet? Gone? The keeper of
The emperor's papers? Was he hid among them?

METTERNICH

But—

FLAMBEAU

And instead of listening for you
The aide-de-camp was singing serenades?

METTERNICH

But—

FLAMBEAU

And the Moorish guardsman? Praying Allah?
Well then, it's just as well that I'm still here!
What discipline! If his spy-glass lights on this
There'll be a row! There'll be the hell of a row!

METTERNICH

Trying to reach a bell.

I will—

FLAMBEAU

Don't move a step! You'll waken him!
He's sleeping on his narrow bed of laurel.

METTERNICH

Throwing himself into a chair.

Oh, but I'll tell this dream! It is an epic!

He moves his finger toward one of the candles, and pulls it away quickly.

Oh! But this candle—

FLAMBEAU

Burns!

METTERNICH

Feeling the point of the bayonet that Flambeau still holds in his way.

And this point —

FLAMBEAU

Pricks!

METTERNICH

Springing to his feet.

Then I'm awake! Then I—

FLAMBEAU

Be quiet!

METTERNICH

But
What about Saint Helena? Waterloo?

FLAMBEAU

Eh? Water—what?—The Emperor stirred.

METTERNICH

It's he!
He!

FLAMBEAU

Saperlipopette! You're whiter than
A bugler's horse!—It's he. He's feeling for
The bolt. He's coming—There! You've wakened him!

METTERNICH

No, no! Impossible! It is not he!
I'm not afraid; it is the Duke of Reichstadt.

It's not he coming out! I know it is
The duke! I'm sure of it!

The door opens.

FLAMBEAU

Sonorously.

The Emperor.

He presents arms. Metternich starts back. But instead of the terrible thick-set shape that one almost expects, there appears on the threshold the swaying figure of a poor child, slim to a fault, who has risen from coughing over his books to come and see what was happening—and who, as he stands in the doorway, white as his linen, holding up his reading-lamp, is made even more feminine by the soft lines of his shirt, open at the throat, and by his hair, showing very fair in the lamplight.

METTERNICH

Aha! It's you! It's you! It is your highness!
How glad I am to see you!

THE DUKE

Really! Why
This sudden tenderness for me?

METTERNICH

The joke
Was carried out so well, I really thought
Another would come out.

FLAMBEAU

As if waking from a dream.

And so did I.

THE DUKE

Looking at Flambeau.

Why—what is this?

FLAMBEAU

A bit of luxury.

METTERNICH

Ringing.

Help!

THE DUKE

Run!

FLAMBEAU

The window!

THE DUKE

But the sentinel
Will shoot you!

FLAMBEAU

Maybe.

THE DUKE

It's a long way to
The woods.

METTERNICH

And if we fire upon him as
He runs—

FLAMBEAU

You'll make it seem the shorter.

THE DUKE

Put
Your livery on.

METTERNICH

Putting his foot on it.

No!

FLAMBEAU

Keep the tagrags! Does
A butterfly crawl back in its cocoon?

Slinging the musket over his shoulder, he springs out onto the balcony.

I'll see you later.

THE DUKE

Following him.

But it's madness!

FLAMBEAU

Sh!
I'll go to Crusoe's cabin in the park.
—The ball tomorrow!

THE DUKE

But it's madness!

FLAMBEAU

I'll
Be there.

THE DUKE

No noise!

METTERNICH

If only he would break
His neck!

Flambeau is heard singing, "*La victoire en chantant.*"

THE DUKE

What's that?

METTERNICH

He's singing!

THE DUKE

What are you
Doing?

FLAMBEAU'S VOICE

A bit of luxury!

He sings, "*—nous ouvre la carrière.*" A shot. The song breaks off. A moment of suspense. Then Flambeau begins, farther off, "*La Liberté—*"

THE DUKE

Missed!

METTERNICH

Bah!
How well he finds his way there in the dark.

THE DUKE

He knows the place; he has been here before.

METTERNICH

To some footmen who come hurrying in, furiously waving them away.

Too late! Go back! And leave my service.

They go back.

THE DUKE

And
Tomorrow, not a word to the police.

METTERNICH

I do not tell a joke against myself.

And carelessly, as the duke goes toward his bedroom.

And what do I care for your veterans?
You're not Napoleon.

THE DUKE

Turning.

Who settled that?

METTERNICH

You have his little hat, but not his head.

THE DUKE

You always have the word you need to damp
My ardor, but this time that word shall be
Not the pinprick that tears my dreaming, but
The lash that rouses me, and makes my dreams
Madder and prouder than before. I've not
My father's head, you say? How do you know?

METTERNICH

How do I know? Look in the looking-glass.

He takes the candelabrum from the table, goes to the cheval-glass, and raises the light.

Look at the length and sadness of your face!
Look at this load, so blond to be so heavy,
Of your fair, womanish hair! Look at yourself!

The duke stands, afraid to go toward the mirror, but looks toward it in spite of himself.

THE DUKE

No!

METTERNICH

And a fatal mist surrounds you!

THE DUKE

No!

METTERNICH

Unknown to you, it is all Germany
And all Spain sleeping in your blood that make you
So sad, so haughty, and so charming.

THE DUKE

Turning his head away, but drawn irresistibly toward the mirror.

No!

METTERNICH

Remember your own self-distrust. *You* reign?
Nonsense! You would make only one of those
Pale, morbid kings who have to be shut up
Or they would abdicate!

THE DUKE

Trying to wrest the candlestick from Metternich's hand.

No!

METTERNICH

You have not
The head of strength; you have the brow of languor
And longing.

THE DUKE

Passing his hand over his forehead.

My brow?

METTERNICH

Slowly you pass over
The brow of an archduke of Austria,
The hand of an infante of Spain.

THE DUKE

Staring at his hand.

My hand?

METTERNICH

Look at the frail and falling fingers you
Have seen in portraits.

THE DUKE

Putting his hands behind him.

No!

METTERNICH

Look at your eyes
Through which your ancestors look back at you!

THE DUKE

Staring wide-eyed, face to face with his reflection.

My eyes?

METTERNICH

Look at those eyes, where other eyes
That you have seen before in picture-frames
Dream of the faggot, weep their lost Armadas.
And you, for all your conscience, all your scruples,
Would dare to reign in France, reign with those eyes!

THE DUKE

Whispering

My father—

METTERNICH

You have nothing of your father!
Look well. Look well. Come nearer to the light.
He envied us our ancient blood. He tried
To steal our blood, to make his own blood older.
But what he stole was melancholy, it
Was weakness, it was—

THE DUKE

Stop! I beg you, stop!

METTERNICH

Look in the mirror! See how pale you turn!

THE DUKE

Enough!

METTERNICH

Pressing the candelabrum into his hand, and holding up his wrist.

There on your lip, you recognize
The proud red doll-like pout? That is the mouth
Of Marie Antoinette, whom France beheaded.
He stole as well our evil fortune!—Raise
The candlestick!

THE DUKE

I am afraid!

METTERNICH

At his ear.

Can you
Look in this mirror at the dead of night
And fail to see your whole race at your back?
That vapor is Joanna the Mad! And see
There, slowly rising in the looking-glass,
The pallor of the king in his glass coffin.

THE DUKE

It is the eager pallor of my father!

METTERNICH

Pointing to the sinister ancestors of the duke in the mirror.

There Rudolph and his lions, put to rout!

THE DUKE

It is the arms and horses of the Consul!

METTERNICH

A madman in a cellar making gold!

THE DUKE

A general in Egypt, making glory!

METTERNICH

Ha, ha! And Charles the Fifth, the ghost with hair
Cropped short, who died of being over-eager
To see his burial!

THE DUKE

My father, help!

Metternich catches the candelabrum, which the duke can no longer hold.

METTERNICH

The Escurial! Phantoms of lunacy!
Black walls!

THE DUKE

Help, fair white palaces! Compiègne!
La Malmaison!

METTERNICH

You see them? Do you see them?

THE DUKE

Roll, drums of Arcola, and drown his voice!

METTERNICH

The glass is filled with them!

THE DUKE

Help, Victories!
Help, golden eagles, against the eagles of black!

METTERNICH

Dead are the eagles!

THE DUKE

No!

METTERNICH

Broken the drums!

THE DUKE

No!

METTERNICH

The prophetic glass is filled with Hapsburgs,
All with your face, your hair.

THE DUKE

Trying to wrest the candelabrum from Metternich.

I'll break the glass!

METTERNICH

More, and still more, they come!

THE DUKE

Twisting the candlestick from Metternich's grasp, and brandishing it.

I'll break the glass!

He throws the heavy candelabrum into the mirror. With a crash of glass the stage becomes dark.

There's not one left!

METTERNICH

Pausing at the door for a moment before he goes.

There always is one left!

THE DUKE

It is not I! Not I!

His voice breaks; he falls in a heap before the broken mirror, crying.

Help! Father! Help!

CURTAIN.

ACT IV

BRUISED WINGS

The curtain rises to the sound of violins and flutes upon the Roman Ruins in the park of Schoenbrunn.

These ruins are, of course, entirely artificial; but, built by an accommodating archaeologist, happily placed before a little wooded hill, clad in mosses and caressed by greenery, they are beautiful in the kindly night, which adds to their size and their romance.

At the back, in the midst of a picturesque heap of stones, a high broken arch rises, and shows beyond an avenue of lawn that climbs like a road of green velvet to an open space, bluish green in the distance, where a tall white statue seems to halt it.

Before the Roman arch is a little fountain, and gods of stone hiding among the reeds.

There are half-ruined colonnades where masquers are strolling, flights of steps where all the figures of the Italian Comedy are going up and down. For the ball is in costume, as there is a vogue for masquerades, for dominos and Venetian cloaks, for strange plumed hats and high standing collars, and for half-masks of black velvet with a fall of black lace to conceal pretty whispering lips.

Two great orange-trees trimmed into globes; a rustic seat against one of the trunks.

Scattered everywhere, fragments of bas-reliefs, broken columns wreathed with ivy, fallen heads of marble.

The lamps are few, and shine with the discreet green of glow-worm, so as not to drown the moonlight.

The part of the park where the ball is held has been enclosed by trellis-work. At the right can be seen the way out, where there are servants in charge of the cloaks. At the left, near the audience, a door of wreathed branches leads to a little theatre. The enclosed space for the ball stretches off at the left, toward the back; the dancing is off there; from that quarter comes music and brighter light. An invisible orchestra is playing waltzes of Schubert, Lanner, and Strauss, softly and languorously.

Masquers passing.

A MASK

Who is the clown?

ANOTHER MASK

Don't know.

THE FIRST MASK

The cardinal?

THE SECOND MASK

Don't know.

FIRST MASK

The pantaloon?

SECOND MASK

Don't know him.

A FOOL IN MOTLEY

It's

Delicious!

A CLOWN

Every one incognito!

A PUNCHINELLO

Catching a marquise's gown.

Your ear?

THE MARQUISE

Why?

THE PUNCHINELLO

Hush! My secret!

He kisses her and runs away.

A PIERROT

Sitting on a fallen column.

Ah, Watteau—

THE PUNCHINELLO

Catching a senorita.

Your ear?

THE PIERROT

Would have loved all these passing masks,—

THE SENORITA

Why?

THE PUNCHINELLO

Hush! My secret!

He kisses her and runs away.

THE PIERROT

—Seen against the ruins.

A HARLEQUIN

Dreamily, one foot on the edge of the fountain.

All is uncertainty and tremolo,
The moon, our hearts, the music, and the water!

Enter Metternich and the French attaché in dominos.

METTERNICH

Condescendingly.

Dear attaché of the French embassy,
Here are half-darkness and half-silences,
You see, there lights and music. For this ball—

THE ATTACHÉ

Enthusiastically.

It's really—

METTERNICH

It is pretty, isn't it?
That way—

THE ATTACHÉ

You're good enough to be my guide?

METTERNICH

I'm less proud of the Congress of Verona
Than of this masquerade that I've arranged,
Of having mingled with the perfumes of
The court, the keen scent of the woods at night.
Well, there's the way out and the cloak-room where
You leave your coat, or your Venetian cloak.
And there, upon a floor of turf, beyond
The Fountain of Love, we have the theatre,
A dainty, leafy theatre, in which
Some princely amateurs will play *Michel*
And—I forget the title—a rose-leaf thing
By a Frenchman—Eugène What's-his-name.

THE ATTACHÉ

And supper?

METTERNICH

Is here.

THE ATTACHÉ

But how?

METTERNICH

On every box the heavens
Will snow down tablecloths and rain down dishes.

THE ATTACHÉ

The orange-trees?

METTERNICH

Yes. They will bring trees here
From all the park, and under each green globe
Two couples can sit down, famished and gay.

THE ATTACHÉ

Supper beneath the orange-trees—a splendid
Idea.

METTERNICH

Ah, well.—For affairs of state—

To a footman.

—Tell them they've played enough Slavonic dances—
I'm not the man to put them off. I must
Leave before supper, and give an answer to
The Hospodars. They're waiting for me.

Calling a footman.

Here,
Those wreaths aren't full enough. To organize
A ball is my diversion; but when it
Has reached its height, the Eastern Question claims
My time again. I love to rule the fates
Of peoples and of balls, the arbiter
Of Europe—

THE ATTACHÉ

And its elegance.

GENTZ

Who has come in a moment before with a masked woman in a domino.

Quite right,
Arbiter elegantiarum.

METTERNICH

Eh?
You're talking Latin? You've been drinking.

GENTZ

Rum.

METTERNICH

You've stayed too long at Fanny Elssler's table.
Oh, that affair! You're too old for such things.

GENTZ

What? I and Fanny? That's all over!

METTERNICH

Really?

Seeing Sedlinsky, who has come in looking for him.

Sedlinsky!

GENTZ

Hand on heart.

Over!

SEDLINSKY

One word!

Speaks in an undertone.

GENTZ

As Metternich moves away.

Over!—I
Ought never to have brought you, Fanny. If
They knew I—What a foolish thing to do!
A dancer!

FANNY

Here I dance to please myself.

She pirouettes. The attaché looks at her admiringly.

GENTZ

They'll find you out. Try to dance badly!

METTERNICH

Oh,
A plot, eh?

SEDLINSKY

For the duke, and at this ball.

METTERNICH

I've no more fear—

GENTZ

Pursuing Fanny, who dances away.

At least, you might just tell
Me why you wished so much to come.

FANNY

Caprice!

She waltzes out. Gentz follows. So does the attaché.

METTERNICH

I've no more fear upon the duke's account.
I've killed his pride. He won't be at the ball.
He is in mourning for it.

SEDLINSKY

But the plot—

METTERNICH

Pooh!

SEDLINSKY

Women—

METTERNICH

Half a dozen featherheads.

SEDLINSKY

Oh, no! Great ladies!

METTERNICH

Ironically.

Really?

SEDLINSKY

Poles and Greeks.
Princess Grazalcowitch!

METTERNICH

Grazalcowitch!
That's really terrible!

To a footman.

A sandwich, please.

SEDLINSKY

You laugh at it? Hush! Here they are now, stealing
Into the darkness, whispering—

He pulls Metternich behind an orange-tree. A number of ladies in lilac dominos have come in. They speak with a slight foreign accent.

FIRST DOMINO

My dear,
How sweet it is to run a risk for him!

SECOND DOMINO

Let us conspire!

THIRD DOMINO

His hair's so light a gold.

FIRST DOMINO

My dear, it's like a halo round his forehead,
In which you can begin to see a crown.

ANOTHER DOMINO

Oh, and his unexpected, double charm;
Bonaparte with fair hair! Hamlet in white!

SEVERAL

Let us conspire!

FIRST DOMINO

Let's order, first of all,
From Stieger in Vienna, a golden bee.

SECOND DOMINO

Vienna? That would be too stupid, dear!
We'll order it from Odiot in Paris.

ANOTHER

And we must always wear with every gown
A huge bouquet of violets.

ALL THE DOMINOS

Oh, yes,
Princess!

ONE WHO HAS NOT SPOKEN

With an inspiration.

And let us even run the risk
Of a return to Empire fashions!

FIRST DOMINO

For
The evening, not for day.

ANOTHER

The bodices
Were cut so low it was disgraceful!

ALL THE DOMINOS

And
The puffs!—The ruffles!—Dear!

METTERNICH

Stepping forward.

Ah, ladies!

THE DOMINOS

Heavens!

METTERNICH

Go on and finish your tremendous plot.
Conspire, conspire! Ha, ha!

He goes out laughing, followed by Sedlinsky. The dominos, who have scattered in seeming terror, tiptoe back again.

THE PRINCESS

And now that, thanks
To a few moments of frivolities,
His slightest fears are quieted, let's prove
To them that female Machiavellis laugh
At Metternich at his most Metternich!

THE DOMINOS

Yes.

THE PRINCESS

You know what your parts are for tonight?

THE DOMINOS

Yes.

THE PRINCESS

Scatter among the masquers.

A GROUP OF MASQUERS

Pursuing a masquer with a huge nose.

See how funny!
—It must be Sandor!—No, it's Furstemberg!

A CROCODILE

Look at the bear, dancing to Schubert!

The masks run in the direction he points.

GENTZ

Sitting on a bench with several pretty women.

What
Is sad Elvira's dress?

THE COLUMBINE

A star.

GENTZ

A night-light.

THE ATTACHÉ

Pursuing Fanny Elssler.

No way of knowing who she is! Are you
An Englishwoman?

FANNY

Ja!

THE ATTACHÉ

A German?

FANNY

Non!

She disappears, followed by the attaché.

THE COLUMBINE

The viscount is a Doge?

A CLEOPATRA

In robes of state.

GENTZ

Then is the baroness the Adriatic?

Tiburce and Thérèse come in. She is wearing a straight tunic of blue and silver, with water-lilies and long shining weeds; she is dressed as a spring.

TIBURCE

Then you don't go to Parma, after all?

THÉRÈSE

Oh, yes! The duchess put it off a day
To see this ball. That's she—the green cape,—with
Bombelles.

TIBURCE

You're going? Good! *Noblesse oblige.*
I could not have endured your intimacy
Much longer with your little Buonaparte.

THÉRÈSE

What do you mean?

TIBURCE

It is our great boast that
Our ancestresses were not always too
Prudish with kings; one does not stoop, when he
Picks up a handkerchief embroidered with
The royal lilies in the corner; but
One's honor can't accept a bit of cloth
Bearing the Bonapartist bee! Woe to
The Ogre's son—

THÉRÈSE

What?

TIBURCE

If he eats our sisters!

THÉRÈSE

Tiburce, the things you say are—

TIBURCE

With a slight, stiff bow.

Warnings.

He moves away. She joins a passing group.

ACT FOUR

A BEAR

Coming in with a Chinese girl on his arm.

How
Do you know I'm a diplomat?

THE CHINESE GIRL

Because
You hide your claws so cleverly!

THE BEAR

If you
But loved me—

THE CHINESE GIRL

Would you sell your skin for me?

A huge woman disguised as a Louis XV shepherdess passes.

THE WOMEN

Oh, look!

GENTZ

That shepherdess has eaten up
Her flock!

THE PUNCHINELLO

Catching the shepherdess.

Your ear?

THE SHEPHERDESS

Why?

THE PUNCHINELLO

Hush! My secret. Sh!

He kisses her and runs away. His voice is heard among the trees.

Your ear?

Gentz and his group follow. The duke and Prokesch enter. Prokesch is in a domino, the duke in a great purple cloak over his uniform, fanning himself nervously with his mask. His manner is weary and yet feverish. The Eaglet is dragging bruised wings.

PROKESCH

So languid among all this gaiety?
What's Metternich been doing to you? You're
Not well tonight.

THE BEAR

Passing again.

Why will you not believe
My love?

THE CHINESE GIRL

I fear you are a bare-faced liar.

They pass on.

PROKESCH

The plot is going well, to all appearance.
This note was sent to me this morning,—see:
"Have him come early to the ball, and wear
His uniform beneath a purple cloak."
That means that it is for tonight; this note—

THE DUKE

Is from some woman who would know me here.
I have obeyed the note; I've only come
To seek adventure.

PROKESCH

No!

THE DUKE

Yes.

PROKESCH

But the plot?

THE DUKE

Ah, what a crime to set upon thy throne,
O bright, O glorious France, a being of
Misfortune, darkness, and the Escurial!
What if too late, when I am crowned, the Past,
Reaching into my soul with yellow hands,
Unburies in me with its hideous claws
Some Charles the Fifth or some Joanna the Mad?
I fear the acclamations at my crowning
May wake the monster sleeping in me.

PROKESCH

Prince!
Why, this is madness!

THE DUKE

Starting.

Do you think so?

PROKESCH

With a flash of comprehension.

Heavens!

THE DUKE

My ancestors, buried in their retreats,—
Grim castles in Bohemia or Castile,
—Had each his madness! What shall mine be? Come,
Let us decide. I am resigned, you see,
But now's the time to choose. I've choice enough!
My ancestors spread out the catalogue.
Shall I be melomaniac? or mad
Bird-catcher? mad astrologer? or blow
At my alembics? mumble rosaries?

PROKESCH

I see only too well what Metternich
Has done. He's told you of the unhappy Hapsburgs?

THE DUKE

Their madnesses were all too melancholy!
But mingled perfumes make new perfumes, and
My mania, made of all their manias, may
Be less depressing. What's my fancy? Why,
My inclinations, that I have kept down
Till now, tell me: my madness shall be love!
Yes, I must love, love, till my hate has crushed
With passionate kisses this my Austrian lip!

He strikes himself upon the mouth.

PROKESCH

Prince!

THE DUKE

With feverish volubility.

When you come to think about it, why
Should not Don Juan be Napoleon's son?
They have the same insatiable soul,
The never-ceasing love of conquest.—O
My blood magnificent, though tainted with
Another's blood, although you could not burst
Out in me as a Caesar, yet your strength
Is not lost; it has made me a Don Juan
When Caesar's birth miscarried. After all
It is one way to be a conqueror.
Thus I shall know that fever of the heart
That Byron promises me will be fatal.
It is one way to be my father still.
Who knows if it is greater to defeat
The world, or know a moment's love? So be it!

The Legend has a happy ending, if
This conqueror is that other's son. So be it!
The pale reflection of that swarthy soldier
Who beat his foemen down, man after man,
I'll conquer sweethearts, woman after woman.
My sun of Austerlitz shall be the moon!

PROKESCH

Prince, prince, this is too sad a thing for jests.

THE DUKE

I know; I hear the voices of the ghosts,
Blue-coated ghosts whirled by me on the wind:
"What of the Epic of the Empire? What
Of all our toil, our trumpets, history?
What of the snow, the blood, the war-songs? What
Of glory? What of all the dead men, left
On all the fields of all our victories?
What is all this to you?"—"A bait for women!"
It's very nice, among the carriages
That crowd the park, if one can ride a horse
That cost three thousand florins, and that one
Can christen Jena. In a woman's eyes
Austerlitz is a feather in one's cap!

PROKESCH

You'll never have the heart to wear it there.

THE DUKE

Oh, yes, I shall , my friend; and I will have
—For it will be becoming to a lover—
A tiny eagle for a scarf-pin.

The orchestra begins again.

Music!

O son of Caesar, you are nothing more
Than a Don Juan out of Mozart; no,
Not even out of Mozart; out of Strauss!
I'll go and waltz now; I must learn to be
Useless and charming, like Vienna ware.

He starts, but stops on seeing the archduchess.

My aunt! Why—?

PROKESCH

No! Not that!

THE DUKE

Cynically.

I want to see.

He waves Prokesch away and goes slowly toward the archduchess. She is dressed like Liotard's *Chocolate Girl* in the Dresden Gallery.

THE DUKE

How thick the lindens' scent is!

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Have you seen
My little tray? I'm very proud of it.

THE DUKE

You're dressed as—?

THE ARCHDUCHESS

As the Dresden Chocolate Girl.

THE DUKE

Ravishing! But your chocolate must be
A burden.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Fanning herself with the tray, to which the cardboard pot and cup are glued.

Not at all.

THE DUKE

Who has sat down on the bench, making room for her, with tender familiarity.

Sit down by me.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Sitting down.

Well, Franz, do you love life—a little?

THE DUKE

I

Love to be nephew of a pretty aunt.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

I love to be the aunt of a big nephew.

THE DUKE

Too pretty.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Drawing back.

And too big.

THE DUKE

To play this game.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

What game?

THE DUKE

Our game of tender intimacy.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

I do not like your eyes tonight.

THE DUKE

But I
Love yours.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Oh, now I see! Tonight we're all
Disguised, and friendship takes the mask of love.

THE DUKE

Oh, friendship, dear aunt with a cousin's eyes,
Friendship and love are such near neighbors, when
They're between aunts and nephews, godmothers
And godsons—do you smell the lindens' perfume?—
And between chocolate-girls and colonels, that
There must be sometimes border skirmishes.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Rising.

I do not like our friendship now.

THE DUKE

Seizing her hand.

I love
This feeling that one cannot understand,
Where everything's confused and—

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Pulling her hand away.

Let me go!

THE DUKE

Oh, if you stand on dignity, archduchess!

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Good-bye, Franz, you have hurt me very much.

She goes out.

THE DUKE

Bah! That drop fell in our clear friendship, that
Precipitates a troubled love. I'll wait.

Seeing Thérèse who has been standing for a moment at the back, idly dipping the long grasses that hang from her shoulders into the basin of the fountain.

Why! Child, are you still here? Not on your way
To Parma? What a lot of lilies! What
Is your disguise?

THÉRÈSE

A—little—

THE DUKE

Ah! I know.
Upon his lonely rock my father had
A spring to be his friend and comfort him
Even for his jailor. That is why, here at
My Saint Helena, Schoenbrunn, my soul could
Not be left altogether comfortless.
I have a jailor, and I have the Spring.

THÉRÈSE

And yet you never lean to see your image
Reflected in me.

THE DUKE

Once I had some hope
Of escaping from my rock. But that's all over.

THÉRÈSE

What?

THE DUKE

No more hope. I've given up all hope.

THÉRÈSE

You are suffering?

THE DUKE

My Little Spring must give me
Its murmuring freshness.

THÉRÈSE

It is here.

THE DUKE

But if
I wish to trouble it?

THÉRÈSE

Then trouble it.

THE DUKE

Speaking suddenly low and brutally.

Tonight—you know—the Tyrolean house,
My hunting-lodge—come there.

THÉRÈSE

I—come—tonight?

THE DUKE

Don't say yes. Don't say no. But I will wait.

THÉRÈSE

But—

THE DUKE

Speaking in his sad, child-like voice.

Think how unhappy I shall always be.
I've lost all hope of playing a great part,
I've nothing left to do but weep. I need
A woman's arms to weep in.

He is almost in her arms, when the sound of a step causes them to draw apart hastily. It is Tiburce passing with a woman on his arm. He looks threateningly at Thérèse. She looks haughtily at him, and goes back to the ball. Tiburce and his partner move on. The duke, who has not recognized Tiburce, scribbles a note and calls a footman.

Send this to
My servants in the castle. I shall not
Go back; I'm sleeping in the hunting-lodge.
Here. Hurry. Bring back word they understand.

THE FOOTMAN

That's all?

THE DUKE

That's all. Tomorrow, the gray mare.

The footman goes out. Fanny Elssler comes in running, and looks around to see if she is followed.

FANNY

Mysteriously.

"His uniform beneath—"

THE DUKE

Turning.

"—a purple cloak."
Prokesch, your note was from a woman!

FANNY

Indicating the attaché, who has just appeared.

Let
Me just elude this mask who's following me,
And I'll come back.

THE DUKE

I'll wait.

Fanny runs off, trying to escape the attaché.

It is my fate.

I give in to it. Let me love,

The music grows more and more languorous. Masquers pass in couples, seeking the shadow.

and have
Tempestuous April weather in my heart.
Let us but love—

Indicating a couple who have come in.

like these—like every one.

But suddenly he starts and steps behind an orange-tree; for the couple, believing themselves alone, have begun talking, and he recognizes Marie-Louise and her chamberlain, Bombelles.

BOMBELLES

But was he very much in love with you?

MARIE-LOUISE

Talking of him again?

BOMBELLES

Again.

THE DUKE

In a stifled voice.

Bombelles!
My mother!

BOMBELLES

Did he love you?

Marie-Louise sits down; Bombelles stands with one knee on the bench.

MARIE-LOUISE

I don't know.
I'm sure I overawed him; even on
The dais, canopied with golden laurels,

He felt himself lower than I in birth;
Then, to seem unembarrassed, he would call
Me "Good Louise." Ah, heavens, yes, he would!
What taste! Now I love sentiment; I am
A woman, after all.

BOMBELLES

Before all!

MARIE-LOUISE

That's
My right.—They grew so angry with me for
A little thing I said, when Saint Aulaire
Brought news to us at Blois of the disaster.
I was in bed; my naked foot peeped out,
And, set upon the polished woodwork like
The feet that Thomire chiseled, seemed to make
The Medicean bed an Empire bed.
Then, for I saw the envoy's eyes steal down,
I smiled and said, "You're looking at my foot?"
Indeed, in spite of all his country's dangers,
It's quite true that the man was looking at it!
I was coquettish? That's a deadly sin!
What else should I have done? It's true that I
Remained a woman, and in the fall of France
(Which everybody knew was bound to come)
The beauty of my foot was still important.

THE DUKE

Supporting himself by the orange-tree.

I must not stay! And yet I cannot stir!

BOMBELLES

What's that gray pebble in your bracelet?

MARIE-LOUISE

Ah,
I cannot look upon it with dry eyes.
It is a bit of—

BOMBELLES

Of the Pyramids?

MARIE-LOUISE

Of course not! It's a real bit of the tomb
Where Juliet lies asleep by Romeo!
It was a gift—

BOMBELLES

For pity's sake, you aren't
Going to speak of Neipperg?

MARIE-LOUISE

Oh, you're jealous
Of Neipperg. Then why talk about the other?

BOMBELLES

With the conviction of a man who would rather be preferred to Napoleon I than to General Neipperg.

That's different. But—did you love him?

MARIE-LOUISE

Who?

BOMBELLES

The Other.

MARIE-LOUISE

Back to him?

BOMBELLES

So great a man!
You must—

MARIE-LOUISE

Oh, as for that, I'm sure no man
Was ever loved for being great. But let's
Not talk about him; let us talk about
Ourselves. Will Parma please you?

BOMBELLES

Was he jealous?

MARIE-LOUISE

So much so that he banished poor Leroy,
The tailor-milliner, because when he
Was fitting me a gown, he could not check
A cry of admiration when he saw

She lets the cape that covered her ball-gown slip down.

My shoulders.

BOMBELLES

Jealous? Then, Napoleon—

MARIE-LOUISE

Startled by this name that is never mentioned.

Oh, hush!

BOMBELLES

Would not have liked to see me feast
My eyes upon your shoulders—nor have liked—

MARIE-LOUISE

Bombelles!

BOMBELLES

To hear me tell your majesty—

THE DUKE

Father, forgive me that I stay!

BOMBELLES

—Your hair
Is dressed a little like our girls' in Arles,
But being blond, is far more beautiful.

MARIE-LOUISE

Faintly.

Charles!

BOMBELLES

He would not have liked to see me bend—

The duke springs out, seizes him by the throat, and hurls him to the ground.

THE DUKE

No! I will not permit it! I forbid you!

He stops a moment, amazed at himself, then suddenly.

Thank God! Then I am saved!

MARIE-LOUISE

Franz!

THE DUKE

For that impulse,
That cry, were not of me! For I shall always
Respect my mother and her liberty.
Then—then it must be He is in my heart,
He dwells in me, and He leapt out in me!
Thanks! I am saved! It was the Corsican.

BOMBELLES

Rising.

Sir!

THE DUKE

Not a word, sir!

With a deep bow.

Madam, my respects.
Go back to Sala, live your pleasant life.
Has not the palace there two wings, one wing
A theatre, the other wing a chapel?
You, living in between, will feel yourself
Evenly balanced between the world and God.
—So, madam, my respects.

MARIE-LOUISE

My son!

THE DUKE

Oh, yes, indeed,
Madam, it is your right to be a woman
And nothing more. Go be a woman in
The palace of Sala. But remember this;
Be sure that you remember—let it be
The bitter vengeance of his glory on you,
Widow who could not even wear her weeds—
Remember that men only look at you
For the magic charm he cast on you, and you
Are only beautiful, and only blond,
Because he once defeated all the world!

MARIE-LOUISE

But—Come, Bombelles!—I—Let us go!

THE DUKE

Go back
To Sala! I am saved! My thanks!

MARIE-LOUISE

Your highness,
Good-bye.

THE DUKE

O hands, hands cold within the tomb,
Still grieving for the marriage-ring you lost,
Hands where her forehead rested long ago,
Who broke her heart that I was not her son,
Hands laid in blessing on my orphan soul,
In tears I kiss you, hands of Josephine!

MARIE-LOUISE

Turning.

The Creole! Do you think, at Malmaison,
She didn't—

THE DUKE

Silence! If it's so, the more
Reason, more reason that I must be faithful!

Marie-Louise and Bombelles go out. Metternich comes in, finishing his conversation with Sedlinsky.

METTERNICH

I think I broke that spoiled child's pride.

He sees the duke.

You here?

Then, seeing that the duke has worn his customary uniform to the masked ball.

And in your uniform? What does this mean?

THE DUKE

Were we not asked to come here in disguise?

SEDLINSKY

The pride your excellency broke last night
Even in pieces keeps its insolence.

METTERNICH

Trying to speak lightly.

Well, hiding in the darkness here? What are
You dreaming of, my little colonel?

THE DUKE

Of
The little corporal.

METTERNICH

Furiously.

I—

Controlling himself, to Sedlinsky.

My despatches
Are waiting me.

He goes out with Sedlinsky, saying between his teeth.

It's all to do again!

FANNY ELSSLER

Who has come back a moment before, coming forward as soon as the duke is alone.

Prince!

THE DUKE

She again! No! I will not—

FANNY

Mischievously, lowering her mask a moment.

Escape?

THE DUKE

Fanny! Escape? How? When?

FANNY

Pretend to flirt
With me. Now listen carefully. But smile.

Affecting a coquettish manner.

Your cousin's at the ball.

THE DUKE

Mastering his excitement and feigning a gallant air.

The countess?

FANNY

Yes.

She lays his hand on her heart.

Just feel my heart! I am as nervous as
Upon an opening night. Beneath her cloak
She wears your uniform—the uniform
That turns the Eaglet to a silver sea-mew!
Already she resembled you, you know,
But since she's dyed her black hair golden, why
Your mirror could not tell the difference!
So while they're playing *Michel and Christine*
You change cloaks quickly with your cousin—

THE DUKE

I
Put on a mask—

FANNY

You disappear like magic—

THE DUKE

At the same moment, a false duke appears!

FANNY

The false duke goes out openly—

THE DUKE

Draws off
The spies who're waiting there to follow me—

FANNY

Goes back to Schoenbrunn—

THE DUKE

Locks herself into
My room—

FANNY

Wakes up so late tomorrow that—

THE DUKE

I'm far away! Only—

FANNY

You see an "only"?

THE DUKE

A huge one. What if any one should speak
To the false duke as she is going out?

FANNY

Impossible. This all has been rehearsed
Just like a ballet. There will be twelve ladies
—Twelve lilac dominos—who'll go with her,
One after another, smiling, pouting, flirting,
Fluttering, chattering, to the very gate,
And she among them, like a shuttle-cock
That flies from battledore to battledore,
Will go from domino to domino.

A BAND OF MASQUERS

Running across at the back.

Who is the wolf?

THE WOLF

Woof! Woof!

He vanishes among the trees.

THE MASQUERS

Who is the bear?

OTHERS

Where? Where?

They all disappear with shrieks of laughter.

FANNY

You leave the park—

THE DUKE

The Hietzing gate?

FANNY

No.

THE DUKE

Where?

FANNY

Take care. Some passers-by. I fan
Myself. Look at your humble servant's fan.

THE DUKE

Well?

FANNY

I have sketched a map of the park upon it.
You see the road? In red. It makes a bend.
You see? The little squares of white are statues;
The little blots of apple-green are trees.
You go this way, past all the naughty guards,
Turn to the left, go down the peacock walk,—

THE DUKE

What are the scratches?

FANNY

When you go up-hill.
Come down again, turn at the Triton fountain,
And come out Emperor by this little gate.
Do you quite understand? I shut my fan.

THE DUKE

Emperor!

FANNY

And the coronation carriage
At once.

THE DUKE

And at the gate, I find—?

FANNY

A cab.

THE DUKE

Eh?

FANNY

With the fastest horses; don't be anxious.

THE DUKE

It takes me?

FANNY

To the rendezvous.

THE DUKE

Which is?

FANNY

Two hours from here; out of your way, but there
The countess would appoint it: Wagram.

THE DUKE

Amused.

Ha!
The Bonaparte.—And Prokesch?

FANNY

I will tell him.
He'll be there.

THE DUKE

And Flambeau? Shall I see him
Again?

FANNY

I don't know. We must wait.

She leads him to a heap of ruins half covered with ivy at the left, among them a huge stone head.

Let's sit
Here in the moonlight for a moment, you
Upon that block, I on the Neptune's head,
—Neptune, may I sit on your head?

THE HEAD OF NEPTUNE

In a cavernous voice.

You may.
Only, you know, there are a lot of ants!

FANNY

Heavens! The head spoke!

THE DUKE

Remembering.

Oh! In the ivy—that's
The entrance to the cave!

THE VOICE

Calmly.

Right in an ant-hill!

THE DUKE

Flambeau!

FLAMBEAU'S VOICE

In the cave of Robinson—

A GROUP OF MASQUERS

Chasing a scarecrow.

Oho!

FANNY

Hush! Masquers.

THE MASQUERS

Disappearing.

Very funny!

FLAMBEAU

Calmly.

—Crusoe.

THE DUKE

What!

Since last night—?

FLAMBEAU

Oh, yes; I've been smoking.

THE DUKE

In

The hole?

FLAMBEAU

Which you made, following the example
Of the inventor of the bearskin busby,
Who had a Mameluke named Friday.

THE DUKE

I
Can't find the place.

FLAMBEAU

It's on your right, just where
I blow some smoke.

A little column of smoke rises from among the rocks.

FANNY

The little Vesuvius!

THE DUKE

But you must be—

FLAMBEAU

Speaking between puffs of smoke.

Uncomfortable—but

A puff.

I said that I

A puff.

was coming to the ball.

FANNY

If they should see us talking to a puff
Of smoke!

FLAMBEAU

Ouch!

THE DUKE

What's the matter?

FLAMBEAU

A return
In force of the army of the ants! The fighting
Has been continuous since yesterday.
Ouch!—They have numbers and I have tobacco!

He is heard puffing furiously.

I blow a cloud of smoke—

THE DUKE

You cannonade them!

FLAMBEAU

I blow a cloud of smoke, there can none aid them!
May I lift up my stone a minute?

THE DUKE

Yes.

One side of the stone rises, and Flambeau half emerges.

FLAMBEAU

You'd think that I was sitting on my grave.

THE DUKE

Fanny has told me—it's tonight, Flambeau!

FLAMBEAU

Good! But look out for Metternich.

THE DUKE

He's gone.

FLAMBEAU

Then there's nobody left would know me!

FANNY

No.

All's going well.

FLAMBEAU

So Metternich has gone!
You never told me!

THE DUKE

But—

FLAMBEAU

You let me stay
Beneath this urn and catch my death of cold!

FANNY

Masquers!

Flambeau slips back into his hole. A crowd of masquers come in, dancing around a magician in a huge beard.

THE MASQUERS

It's Sandor!—It's Josika!—No,
It's Thalberg!—No, for Thalberg is a Turk!
—It's Zichy!—No!—He'll get away!—Oh, catch him!

The magician ducks under the joined hands of the circle and escapes. The masquers follow.

FLAMBEAU

Reappearing.

Gone?

THE DUKE AND FANNY

Gone.

FLAMBEAU

Climbing out.

Then—

THE DUKE AND FANNY

What?

FLAMBEAU

Lowering the stone.

Let down the trap.

THE DUKE

But if
They see you, then what will they say?

FANNY

Get back!
Hurry! It's dangerous!

FLAMBEAU

What will they say?

The masquers come back.

A MASQUER

Pointing to Flambeau.

See there! Ha, ha! A veteran of the Empire!

FLAMBEAU

Did you hear that? All right! That's what they'll say.

OTHER MASQUERS

Good! Very good!

FLAMBEAU

I'm comfortable now.

He puts on his busby and smokes. The theatre bell rings, a footman hangs a placard on the branches of its doorway, reading,

Michel and Christine,
Comedietta in one act.
By MM. Eugene Scribe and Henri Dupin.

All of the masquers come from the ball. Most of them stop to look at Flambeau.

ONE OF THE MASQUERS

The soldier, look!

ANOTHER

How well he's gotten up!

THE HARLEQUIN

Looking at him nearer.

Look at his little earrings! Capital!

A LITTLE FEMALE MEPHISTO

Oh, and his great false eyebrows! Wonderful!

She stands on tiptoe and tries to touch them. Flambeau draws back.

FLAMBEAU

Aside to Fanny.

But how shall I get out without a cloak?

FANNY

Here's Gentz's check; his cloak is very handsome.

A MASK

Good evening, veteran.

FLAMBEAU

Your servant, sir.

ANOTHER MASK

Well, my good man, you served in—?

FLAMBEAU

The Grand Army!

Laughter.

FLAMBEAU

To himself.

They didn't laugh when she was quartered on 'em!

He walks up and down.

THE MASQUERS

A picture by Raffet!—Charlet!—Vernet!

A PANTALOON

Feeling his uniform.

Look at the holes! The dust! The powder-stains!
Who are your tailors, sir?

FLAMBEAU

They're tailoresses;
An old firm: War & Victory, Sisters.

THE PANTALOON

Oh?
Indeed?

FLAMBEAU

Turning away.

We haven't the same costumers.

A SCARAMOUCHE

Following him.

By heaven, it's Zichy!

Offering his hand.

Count—

FLAMBEAU

Blowing smoke in his face.

Excuse my pipe!

THE SCARAMOUCHE

He wears false manners with his false moustache!

FLAMBEAU

Singing.

"Back from Russia, on the march,
Our feet would freeze, our throats would parch."

A FLORENTINE NOBLEMAN

He's splendid!

Taking him by the arm.

Well, the cold in Russia must
Have made you shiver?

FLAMBEAU

The way we made them shiver.

Singing.

"But Lordy, it would keep you warm
Just to see his uniform!"

THE HARLEQUIN

Taking his other arm.

His uniform looked pretty shabby, eh?

Laughter.

FLAMBEAU

And so did you when he had finished, eh?

The laughter dies away.

SEVERAL MASQUERS

Without enthusiasm.

Ha! Very funny.

THE PANTALOON

Very natural.

THE SCARAMOUCHE

Oh, quite in character.

THE HARLEQUIN

Aside to the others.

But do you think
It's in the best of taste?

The masquers go into the theatre by twos and threes. Fanny, who has joined the duke, eagerly watches for them all to be gone.

FANNY

When they're all in
The theatre—

FLAMBEAU

Roaring like a drill-sergeant.

Get along in!

FANNY

I'll go
And find your cousin.

The footman whom the duke had sent to the palace comes back and goes up to him.

FLAMBEAU

Move along!

THE DUKE

What is it?

THE FOOTMAN

I've told your highness' servants that your highness
Was sleeping in the hunting-lodge tonight.

He goes out.

FANNY

What?

THE DUKE

I forgot. I planned to pass the night
In the hunting-lodge. The countess must go there
To take my place. You'll tell her?

FANNY

I will tell her,
And bring her here to you. Wait here.

She goes out. Thérèse and Tiburce are among the last masquers at the door of the theatre.

FLAMBEAU

Get on!
Get on!

TIBURCE

Are you not coming in?

THÉRÈSE

No, I
Am going.

TIBURCE

Bowing.

As you please.

He goes into the theatre. She goes toward the exit at the right.

THE DUKE

Seeing her.

But she may keep
The rendezvous!

Calling.

Thérèse!

She stops at the gate.

THE DUKE

To himself.

No, let her go.
I'd like to know that she loved me enough
To go.

Tenderly to Thérèse.

Until tonight!

She goes out.

FANNY

See where they are
In the play. Now is the time!

Flambeau goes into the theatre. Fanny beckons and a young man muffled in a great black cloak comes forward.

FLAMBEAU

Coming out of the theatre.

All eyes are wet
Because poor Stanislas is sad,—and is
A Slav.

FANNY

Duke, here's the countess.

The countess unmasks.

THE DUKE

Oh, I see
Myself! It's I that's coming toward me, in
The dark!

THE COUNTESS

Good evening, Napoleon.

THE DUKE

Good evening, Napoléone.

THE COUNTESS

I'm
Quite cool. Are you?

THE DUKE

I'm thinking of the risks
That you will run for me.

THE COUNTESS

Oh, not for you!

THE DUKE

No?

THE COUNTESS

For the name, the glory, and my race
Upon the throne of France!

THE DUKE

Ah, how you clash
Your weapons, Amazon!

THE COUNTESS

It would not be
So great a deed if it were done for love.

THE DUKE

But, while we speak of love, if—when you've taken
My place—by any chance—a woman
Should come—

THE COUNTESS

There! I was sure of it!

THE DUKE

Tell her
Of my escape, and swear that you'll—

FLAMBEAU

Coming out of the door of the theatre.

Is silent— The soldier

FANNY

Very well.

FLAMBEAU

Without a murmur.

THE DUKE

Swear that you'll tell me if she comes tonight.

THE COUNTESS

Thinking of hearts with Empire waiting for you?

THE DUKE

It is because I shall be Emperor
Tomorrow, that I hold this heart tonight
Of such great value.

THE COUNTESS

Plenty more will love you!

THE DUKE

But can I trust them as I trust the child
Ready to fall, without a thought of glory,
If only in her fall she comforts me,
Who'll come, perhaps, to this chaste rendezvous?

THE COUNTESS

And you'll love other women.

THE DUKE

Yes, perhaps.
But I shall never wait so eagerly
At any rendezvous that I may keep,

As I shall wait with open arms tonight
At this one rendezvous I shall not keep!

THE COUNTESS

Scornfully.

Your highness' heart seems very much affected.

THE DUKE

Less than it will be if you say "She came."

FLAMBEAU

Coming out.

Make haste; the soldier, with his eyes turned up
To heaven, is singing something to his colonel.

The duke and the countess put on their masks.

THE COUNTESS

Quick, let us change.

FLAMBEAU

Wait, when I give the word.
Don't be afraid, I'm watching. Are you ready?

Solemnly lifting his ramrod.

Now, by the power of my magic wand—

THE COUNTESS

You may create a Caesar! Think of that!

FLAMBEAU

That's why my magic wand's a ramrod.

The duke is at the right, the countess at the left. Together they throw off their cloaks, and for a moment the moonlight shows two Dukes of Reichstadt. Then the change is made: the duke wraps himself in the black domino and pulls the hood over his head; the countess throws the purple cloak carelessly over one shoulder so as not to hide the uniform and the orders, leaves her head bare to show her fair hair—and there is again only one Duke of Reichstadt, at the left.

FLAMBEAU

Listening to the applause and stir in the theatre.

Hark!

They're coming out!

The music plays loudly. The stage grows brighter, for footmen roll in a number of orange-trees with lights hidden among their leaves, and their boxes set as supper-tables, with lustre china and iridescent glass, snowy linen and an abundance of flowers. A crowd of powdered footmen place four chairs at each table, and set the two orange-trees that were already on the stage like those that have just been brought in. The masquers come out of the theatre, holding hands in a long chain, and dancing in time to the galop the orchestra is playing. As they see the orange-trees, there are cries of admiration, and the line of masquers, led by the archduchess and the French attaché, begins a serpentine dance among the trees.

THE MASQUERS

The orange-trees!—We'll have
Our supper here!—One, two!—You're stepping on
My train!—The orange-trees! Bravo!—Now, let's
Dance in a ring!—Baron!—Marquise!—I've lost
My hoop!—Faster!—Again!—Once more!—Around!
—Now then, one, two—at three we'll all let go!
And—three!

The chain breaks up.

THE MASQUERS

Running to the tables.

Hurrah!

FANNY

To the duke, indicating the countess who is standing at the lower left, surrounded by the lilac dominos.

Our ladies swarm about her!

THE LILAC DOMINOS

Around the countess, coquettishly.

Prince!—Duke!—Your highness!—Monseigneur!

GENTZ

With the jealousy of an old gallant.

They will
Not look at anybody else tonight.

MASQUERS

Calling each other.

Oh, Sandor!—Zichy!—Mina!

THE DOMINO CALLED MINA

Sitting down.

How did you
Recognize me?

THE PUNCHINELLO

By that jade necklace.

THE SCARAMOUCHE

We
Can gather oranges for our dessert.

A LILAC DOMINO

To the countess.

Duke!

THE BEAR

Who has taken off his head, reading the menu.

Danube sterlets, Volga caviar.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Placing the masquers

Mimi von Meyendorff at Olga's table.

They all sit down except the countess, who is standing at the left, chatting with a lilac domino. The duke, keeping his eyes fixed on her, sits at one of the tables with Fanny and Flambeau. Laughter. Ripple of conversation. Supper begins.

GENTZ

Rising

Ladies and gentlemen:

MASQUERS

Calling for silence.

Sh! Sh!

THE DUKE

Watching the countess move slowly toward the right.

It is
The fearful moment—

GENTZ

This first glass I raise
In honor of our absent friend—

THE DUKE

She's going—

GENTZ

—Who has prepared these pleasures for us, and
Has gone back to the palace—leaving us
These lights, this music and this peach ice-cream—
To work till daybreak dictating despatches.

Applause. While all the masquers are looking at Gentz the countess goes toward the gate. As she goes, a lilac domino rises from each table and goes with her, whispering and coquetting with her, until another takes her place.

FANNY

How calm she is! She's going—

GENTZ

To the Prince
Councilor, Chancellor, and Chamberlain!

The first cup of champagne to Metternich,
A Prince of Austria, Grandee of Spain,
Duke of Portella, Count of Daruvar,—

FANNY

She's caught your careless manner to perfection!

GENTZ

Chevalier of the Orders of Saint Anne,—

THE DUKE

He doesn't know it, but he's helping us.

GENTZ

—The Seraphim of Sweden, Elephant
Of Denmark, and the Golden Fleece—

FLAMBEAU

If only
Metternich has a few more titles left—

GENTZ

Curator of the Fine-Arts Institute,
Hereditary Peer of Hungary—

THE DUKE

My step can't be so slow as that! She must
Be overdoing it!

GENTZ

Bailiff of Malta—

THE DUKE

Well! What's she waiting for!

GENTZ

And Knight Grand Cross
Of the Falcon, Lion, Bear, and Charles the Third!

Wiping his forehead.

Whew!

THE LADY ON GENTZ'S RIGHT

To the lady on his left.

He can't finish! Fan him, quick!

The fans on each side flutter with comical haste.

GENTZ

And member
Of several learned societies!

ALL

Hurrah!

All are standing, clinking glasses. The countess has reached the gateway, with the last lilac domino; with one foot on the threshold, she stands talking and laughing nervously for a moment for fear of betraying herself by too hasty a departure, kisses the hand of the lilac domino to take leave.

FLAMBEAU

And while they all are drinking, prince,
She's just about to go—she's going—

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Calling from her place.

Franz!
Going already?

The countess steadies herself by the trellis so as not to fall.

THE DUKE

All is lost!

FLAMBEAU

Hell's fire!

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Rising.

Wait!

FANNY

The archduchess isn't in the plot!

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Coming up to the countess.

You wounded me just now, Franz, but—

She stops, looks more closely at the eyes and mouth of the masquer before her, and, barely above her breath.

Ah!

THE DUKE

Lost!

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Drawing back.

But—

After a long instant, she holds her hand, saying in her natural voice.

Till tomorrow.

THE COUNTESS

Losing her head for a moment.

Madam! What—I—

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Sharply and in an undertone.

Kiss

My hand.

The countess collects herself, kisses the archduchess's hand quite in the manner of the Duke of Reichstadt, and goes out.

A MASQUER

The duke already gone?

TIBURCE

A whim
Of his!

THE DUKE

As the archduchess passes him.

Will you give me your hand—as to
The Duke of Reichstadt?

THE ARCHDUCHESS

After looking at him for a moment.

Yes—bold masquer!

GENTZ

Rising.

Now—

SEVERAL VOICES

Again!

GENTZ

One word—

THE HARLEQUIN

Get to it, Gentz!

GENTZ

I just
Wished to complete my little toast. Before,
I made one slip—intentionally; for
The Duke of Reichstadt being here, I could
Not give to Metternich his proudest title.
Now that the duke is gone, I have the honor
To give: The conqueror of Bonaparte.

ALL

The conqueror of Bonaparte!

They empty their glasses. Flambeau pours his into the barrel of his gun.

THE DUKE

What are
You doing?

FLAMBEAU

Wetting it a bit, for fear
It might go off.

The conversation becomes general.

THE SCARAMOUCHE

This Bonaparte—

THE PANTALOON

He was
An imitation marble.

TIBURCE

Plaster.

THE DUKE

What!

FLAMBEAU

Think of the Empire, duke.

THE PUNCHINELLO

Much overrated.

FLAMBEAU

To the duke.

Take care!

TIBURCE

Second-rate as a general,
And when he rode a camel—ha, ha, ha!

THE BEAR

You ought to see Gentz take him off!

FLAMBEAU

Cristi!

THE HARLEQUIN

Do take him off!

FLAMBEAU

To the duke.

Remember, you've gone out.

GENTZ

Rising, and pulling a lock of hair down over his forehead.

The hair!

Knitting his brow.

The eye!

Putting his hand in his waistcoat.

The hand!

Striking an attitude.

And there you are!

Applause.

THE DUKE

Twisting his napkin.

Oh!

FLAMBEAU

Who has turned furiously toward Gentz, turns back quietly, saying.

Yes, he takes him off, but even that
Is great, because it calls him up.

THE CROCODILE

And he
Was always falling off his horse!

FLAMBEAU

That's all
That the extremists found to say about him.

THE PIERROT

He had no conversation!

FLAMBEAU

What a pity!

THE DUKE

Oh, if they couldn't lie about the eagle,
What would the worms and beetles have to say?

TIBURCE

And his name was not Napoleon.

FLAMBEAU

What's that?

It is now the duke that holds back Flambeau.

TIBURCE

He made that up. It's very easy.
You want to make a fine, high-sounding name—

FLAMBEAU

Aside.

You ass!

TIBURCE

That might get into history.
You take three sharp, clear sounds, thus: Na-po-le,
And then a heavy sound, thus: on!

THE BEAR

Bravo!

TIBURCE

Yes, Na-po-le, the lightning; on, the thunder!

A MASQUER

What was his real name?

TIBURCE

Don't you know?

THE MASQUER

Why, no.

TIBURCE

His name was Nicholas.

FLAMBEAU

Starting up.

Eh? Nicholas?

SEVERAL MASQUERS

Good for the veteran!

GENTZ

Laughing, and passing Flambeau a plate.

Nicholas!—A quail?

FLAMBEAU

Well, Nicholas knew how to win a battle.

THE CLOWN

And the court he somehow got up overnight!

TIBURCE

When one talked titles, family, etiquette,
Why, there was simply nobody to answer.

FLAMBEAU

The Emperor of France not good enough?

A WOMAN'S VOICE

But still—in war—

TIBURCE

What did he do? He wrote
Reports.

THE PUNCHINELLO

And used to stand on distant hills.

FLAMBEAU

By God—!

THE DUKE

Hush!

TIBURCE

Once a ball was good enough
To wound him in the foot at Ratisbon:
Think what a subject for a painting!

FLAMBEAU

Furiously, to the duke.

Steady!

THE DUKE

But you are—

FLAMBEAU

Take away this knife!

Fanny takes it.

TIBURCE

Sitting facing the back of his chair and sipping his wine.

In short—

THE DUKE

Clenching his fists.

He'd better not say—

FLAMBEAU

Pleading.

You'll put up with it?

THE DUKE

Not for an Empire!

TIBURCE

Between sips.

Well—this famous hero—

FLAMBEAU

As the duke is about to spring forward.

No, no!

TIBURCE

He was a coward.

THE DUKE

Rising.

I—

A VOICE FROM THE BACK

You lie!

ALL

Leaping to their feet, talking all at once.

Eh? What? Who spoke? What's that? Who? Where?

GENTZ

Who has kept his seat.

Sensation.

FLAMBEAU

Saved! Somebody has taken up the insult!

TIBURCE

Who dared—?

THE FRENCH ATTACHÉ
Coming down.

I.

THE SCARAMOUCHE
Aside to Tiburce.

It's an attaché of the
French embassy.

TIBURCE

What? *You* give me the lie?
You represent the king!

GENTZ
Finishing his bunch of grapes.

Most entertaining.

THE ATTACHÉ

In this I represent my country, sir.
You are insulting France when you insult
The man whom she loved for so many years.

TIBURCE

Buonaparte?

THE ATTACHÉ

Pray say Bonaparte.

TIBURCE

Well, Bonaparte, then.

THE ATTACHÉ

No. The Emperor.

TIBURCE

Your card.

They exchange cards.

THE ATTACHÉ

I leave tomorrow. Let us meet
Tomorrow morning.

He joins two friends and talks to them in an undertone. The music has begun again and the masquers are going back to the ball.

FLAMBEAU

Who has disappeared a moment, coming back in a cloak, to the duke.

Come! I've got the cloak.

Opening it.

It's satin lined.

TIBURCE

Who has sat down at a table, nervously holding out his glass to a footman.

Water.

THE FOOTMAN

Who is the one the duke sent back to the palace, filling his glass.

You're hard upon
The Corsican, sir.

TIBURCE

Haughtily.

Eh?

THE FOOTMAN

Your sister's more
—Kind to his son.

Tiburce starts.

Do you wish to take them by
Surprise?

TIBURCE

Ha! When?

THE FOOTMAN

Tonight.

TIBURCE

And where?

THE FOOTMAN

I know.

TIBURCE

Signing him to wait outside.

Wait for me.

His hand to his sword, as he goes out.

I'll rid Austria of him!

THE DUKE

On his way out with Flambeau, who is waiting for him at the gate, to the attaché.

My thanks.

THE ATTACHÉ

Why?

THE DUKE

Raising his mask a moment.

Hush.

THE ATTACHÉ

The duke!

THE DUKE

A plot.

THE ATTACHÉ

Why tell—?

THE DUKE

Sir, I have nothing but my secret; that
I give you. Rendezvous tonight at Wagram.
Come.

THE ATTACHÉ

I?

THE DUKE

Yes; do you not belong to us?

THE ATTACHÉ

I belong to the king.

THE DUKE

But you are going
To fight tomorrow for my father, in
My place. There is a part of me in you.

Bowing.

Until tonight.

THE ATTACHÉ

You hope to win me?

THE DUKE

I
Am sure to win you. Did my father not
Win over to him Philippe de Ségur?

THE ATTACHÉ

Tomorrow I return to France; I warn you—

THE DUKE

You are a future Marshal of the Empire.

THE ATTACHÉ

—That if they send my regiment against you,
I shall direct the firing.

THE DUKE

Certainly.
Let us at least shake hands before we fight.

They shake hands.

THE ATTACHÉ

I shall reach Paris on the fifth; have you
Any commissions? I should be most honored—

THE DUKE

I hope to reach the—Empire before you.

THE ATTACHÉ

But if I come before you to the—Kingdom?

THE DUKE

Give my respects to the Colonne Vendôme.

CURTAIN

ACT V

A PLAIN. A few low bushes; a hillock whose grass is stirred by a never-ceasing wind; a little cabin built of fragments of gun-carriages, surrounded by some struggling geraniums; the road going by; the sign-post, striped with the Austrian colors, and that is all. Earth and sky, grass and stars. A plain. A vast plain. The plain of Wagram.

The duke, Flambeau, and Prokesch are waiting motionless in their cloaks. Silence,—through which the whistling of the wind is heard.

THE DUKE

Opening his cloak to let the wind blow it out, and closing it again quickly.

Wagram, I take thy sharp air to my heart!

To Flambeau, who is watching the road to the left.

The horses?

FLAMBEAU

Not yet. We have come too soon.

THE DUKE

At the first rendezvous I have with France
It's right that I come early, like a lover!

He walks up and down and stops before the sign-post.

Their sign-post! Black and yellow! I shall soon
Be able to go out and never see
A black and yellow post,—but white French posts
With sweet French names. Oh, think! to read "Saint-Cloud"
Instead of

He steps up on a stone to read the post.

"Grosshofen!"

Suddenly remembering something.

Why—my regiment
Is marching to Grosshofen, at daybreak!

FLAMBEAU

What!

THE DUKE

I gave the order yesterday, before
I knew.

FLAMBEAU

Well, we'll be far away when they
Come by—at daybreak.

An old one-armed man with a white beard comes out of the cabin.

THE DUKE

Who's that man?

FLAMBEAU

A friend.
We've used his cabin for our meetings. He's
A former soldier; he guides visitors
On the battlefield.

THE PEASANT

Seeing them, begins mechanically.

To left, the—

FLAMBEAU

Never mind;
I have been here before.

The peasant recognizes him, smiles and salutes.

PROKESCH

To Flambeau.

What turned this man
Away from Austria?

THE PEASANT

Overhearing.

Sir, I was dying;
I crawled along; the great Napoleon
Came by—

FLAMBEAU

All the next day he rode about
The field.

THE PEASANT

The Emperor stopped his horse—for me!
And there before him—*him!*—he had my arm
Cut off by his own doctor.

FLAMBEAU

Yvan.

THE PEASANT

So,
If his son doesn't like Vienna, let
Him leave! I'll help him go!

Proudly showing his empty sleeve.

My arm—cut off—
Before the Emperor!

FLAMBEAU

Aye, aye! It is
Not every day you have an arm cut off
Before Napoleon!

THE PEASANT

With a resigned gesture.

That's war!

The two veterans sit side by side on the little bench by the cabin, smoking, and occasionally speaking dreamily.

They fought
Here!

FLAMBEAU

Yes, they died.

THE PEASANT

We died.

FLAMBEAU

They skirmished!

THE PEASANT

So
Did we.

FLAMBEAU

They fired among the bushes!

THE PEASANT

So
Did we.

FLAMBEAU

Sometimes an officer, all black
With smoke, would come and say, "We've won!"

THE PEASANT

And so
Did ours.

FLAMBEAU

Rising in indignation.

What!

He shrugs his shoulders and smiles.

Well—

He shakes the old man by the hand.

If any one should hear
He'd think that we were two old fools.

THE DUKE

Motionless at the back.

I heard.
I did not think so.

THE PEASANT

Philosophically, looking at his flowers.

My geraniums
Are doing well!

FLAMBEAU

I should think so—just there—
Eleven little drummer-boys!

THE DUKE

Coming up.

Who?

FLAMBEAU

I
Can see them still: eleven little heads,
Under eleven caps, that never troubled
About the rights and wrongs of things, but marched,
And played their drums, and loved to be alive.
They found the soft side of our sutler's wife,
And stole her goodies; and we all joked with them—
But when they beat the charge, drumming away
Like little rabbits, it turned your bayonet
To lightning! They were there, when a cannon coughed
And spat, and—

He imitates the movement of a man mowing.

every one of them! You should
Have seen our sutler's wife, poor thing! She raised
Her apron, like the old women gleaning wheat,

And gathered up their little drumsticks.—Well,
It's no good thinking of them now!

Clearing his throat.

H'm! H'm!

He picks a geranium, and with a forced gaiety.

To turn a commonplace geranium
To the Legion of Honor: take three petals off.

He pulls off three petals; the two that are left form a little red butterfly which he puts in the buttonhole of his overcoat.

Do you like your new home on my pretty coat,
Little geranium?—There! Isn't that
The order that you gave me, sire?

THE DUKE

Sadly.

I gave
It in a dream.

FLAMBEAU

I wear it—in a flower.

A moment before, a number of men muffled in cloaks have come up, shaken hands, and formed groups.

A SHADOW

Leaving the group and coming toward the duke and Flambeau.

Saint Helena.

FLAMBEAU

Answering.

Schoenbrunn. Pass.

THE DUKE

Recognizing the newcomer.

Marmont!

MARMONT

Bowing.

Ah, duke! Good luck.

THE DUKE

Indicating the group at back.

Who are those shadows?

MARMONT

Friends.

THE DUKE

Then why do they stand so far off?

MARMONT

They are afraid
To intrude upon your highness' solitude.
For, sire, already you are Emperor!

THE DUKE

Shivers, and, after a silence.

Emperor? I? Tomorrow! I am free!
I am only twenty, my reign has just begun!
Ah, God, how glorious it is to be
Just twenty, and to be my father's son!

They say that I am weak and ill. They lie!
I am young and brave. I will be weak no more.
How still it is this evening. Emperor! I?

THE VOICE OF A CONSPIRATOR

Arriving.

Schoenbrunn.

ANOTHER VOICE

Answering.

Saint Helena.

THE DUKE

Emperor!

Tonight my soul has grown so great, it seems
That my whole people might come there for mass.
My soul is the cathedral of my dreams,
Notre-Dame!

A VOICE

Saint Helena.

ANOTHER VOICE

Schoenbrunn. Pass.

THE DUKE

To reign! I mount and ride—to reign! But first,
Wagram, I let thy strong wind bear me up,
Thy breath of glory slake my lifelong thirst,
Here of thy air I drink the stirrup-cup!

To reign! Not like those old, safe, stupid kings
—How tired they must become of life at court!—
But to reign, to serve high causes, do great things,
Right wrong—ah, Prokesch, that is noble sport!

People who wrote the Legend with your blood,
Come welcome home at last the Emperor's son!
He will repay, in peace, in all things good,
The glory that you lent Napoleon.

Henceforth we will fight only for the right;
Our wars of conquest shall from this day cease.
(I seem to see a mother, through the night,
Hold out her child, and call on me for peace.)

O France, I have suffered too much not to hear;
I have fed too much on falsehoods to be false.

Liberty, Liberty, you need not fear
A prince who has lived his life in prison walls.

I will—I will—Oh, I am going to reign!
I am twenty! Youth and my expectancy
Bear me upon their wings beyond this plain
To where my Capital is waiting me!

O perfume of the chestnut-trees, along
The way that I shall ride! O flags that burn,
Three-colored, in the sun! O drunken throng!
O the return, the glorious return!

The great, fierce city hails me as I go!
The people cheer and sing; the children dance,
Muskets are brandished—to be welcomed so
By Paris, is to kiss the lips of France!

Paris! I hear thy bells already!

A VOICE

Saint Helena.

ANOTHER VOICE

Schoenbrunn.

THE DUKE

Paris! Oh, I see—
I see the Louvre's image shining faint
In the Seine's tremulous transparency!

And you who served my father all those years,
Who have suffered so much and so long, alas!
Old soldiers, on my hands I feel your tears!
Paris!

A VOICE

Saint Helena.

ANOTHER VOICE

Schoenbrunn. Pass.

FLAMBEAU

To the duke, who is tottering in exhaustion.

What is the matter?

THE DUKE

Steadying himself.

Nothing, nothing!

PROKESCH

Taking his hand.

You

Are burning!

THE DUKE

Aside.

To the narrow of my bones!

Aloud.

But that will pass off when I gallop! See,
The stars are twinkling like the rowels of spurs!
Here are the horses! Let us ride away!

The horses have been brought up. Flambeau leads the one intended for the duke to him.

PROKESCH

Indicating the conspirators.

Why have these people come?

MARMONT

To let us know

They've had a finger in the plot.

THE DUKE

A whip!

A CONSPIRATOR

Presenting one and bowing.

Here, at your service—the Vicomte d'Otranto.

THE DUKE

With a slight start.

What? Fouché's son?

FLAMBEAU

Don't let that scare you now!
The stirrup long?

THE DUKE

No, short.

ANOTHER CONSPIRATOR

Bowing.

May I present
Myself? Goubeaux, the foremost agent of
The Countess Camerata.

THE DUKE

Very well.

GOUBEAUX

Goubeaux—her foremost agent.

ANOTHER CONSPIRATOR

Sir, Pionnet.
I represent King Joseph. I have brought
The moneys he has sent from time to time.

THE DUKE

The snaffle only.

ANOTHER CONSPIRATOR

I have placed the guides,
And the fresh horses. At the nearest town,
You can disguise yourself.

Bowing.

Sir, Chenonceaux.

FLAMBEAU

Yes, So-and-so.

THE CONSPIRATOR

No, Chenonceaux!

ANOTHER CONSPIRATOR

I've brought
The passports—thankless task! Here. Wonderful
How well they forge things nowadays.

Bowing.

Guibert.

ALL THE CONSPIRATORS

Talking all together.

Pionnet!—Guibert!—Goubeaux!

FLAMBEAU

We understand!

A CONSPIRATOR

Catching the duke's stirrup.

Your father had a splendid memory
For names.

ANOTHER CONSPIRATOR

Borokowski! I, your majesty,
Ordered the countess' uniform!

THE DUKE

Yes, yes!
I will remember every one of you!
And best of all, this one who does not speak!

He points with his whip to a man who has been standing scornfully apart, wrapped in his cloak.

Your name?

The man removes his hat and comes forward; the duke recognizes the French attaché.

You here?

THE ATTACHÉ

Not as a partisan;
Just as a friend. I only came because—

FLAMBEAU

To horse! The sky is lightening in the east!

THE DUKE

Setting his foot in the stirrup.

My hand is on the rein! The die is cast!

THE ATTACHÉ

I came here only to defend you, duke.

THE DUKE

Stopping as he is about to spring into the saddle.

Defend me? Why?

THE ATTACHÉ

I thought you were in danger.

THE DUKE

Still with his foot in the stirrup.

In danger? What?

THE ATTACHÉ

That fool I fight tomorrow
Left the ball early without telling me
Where I could find him. I ran after him
And nearly caught him, when he spoke to some one
And froze me where I stood by what I heard.
It was a plot to kill your highness, at
The rendezvous this evening.

THE DUKE

God! The countess!

THE ATTACHÉ

The rendezvous was here, I knew. I came,
But there's no danger: I'll go back again.

THE DUKE

The rendezvous was in the hunting-lodge!
They'll kill the countess in my place. We must
Go back!

GENERAL CRY

No!

A CONSPIRATOR

Why?

THE DUKE

The countess!

PROKESCH

But she can
Disclose herself.

THE DUKE

Ah, you don't know her! She
Would let those villains kill her ten times over,
To let me have ten minutes' start. Go back!

SEVERAL CONSPIRATORS

No!

THE DUKE

Yes! I cannot let myself be killed
And I not there!

D'OTRANTO

Our trouble thrown away!

A CONSPIRATOR

Must we conspire again?

MARMONT

You can't desert
Us now!

ANOTHER CONSPIRATOR

What about France?

ANOTHER CONSPIRATOR

And what about
The Empire?

THE DUKE

Back!

MARMONT

We must go on!

THE DUKE

We must
Go back!

PROKESCH

To go back is to abdicate
The crown, perhaps forever!

THE DUKE

To go on
Is to abdicate my soul!

MARMONT

But sometimes one
Must sacrifice—

THE DUKE

A woman?

MARMONT

But to risk
A certain victory for a woman—!

FLAMBEAU

Well,
At least the lad's a real French prince.

D'OTRANTO

Firmly to the duke.

Will you
Go on?

THE DUKE

No! Let me pass! I will go back!

D'OTRANTO

If he will not go on, carry him off!

THE CONSPIRATORS

Springing forward.

Yes!

THE DUKE

Stand aside, or I will take my whip
And charge you like Murat, my uncle! Help,
Prokesch, Flambeau!

A CONSPIRATOR

Take him by force!

THE DUKE

To the attaché.

And you!
You came here to defend my life, but now
More than my life, my honor and my faith
Are in danger: help me!

THE ATTACHÉ

No, go on, your highness!

THE DUKE

What! Go, and leave—

THE ATTACHÉ

Go on, I will go back
And help the countess!

THE DUKE

You are not on my side,
And yet will aid in my escape?

THE ATTACHÉ

Go on!
I am doing it for the woman!

THE DUKE

Yes, but still—

THE ATTACHÉ

We both must hurry! Prokesch knows the way!

THE DUKE

I cannot—

SEVERAL VOICES

Yes! Yes! Yes!

MARMONT

That's the best plan!

The sound of a galloping horse is heard.

ALL THE CONSPIRATORS

Hurry! Go on!

THE COUNTESS

Suddenly appearing in the duke's uniform, covered with dust, pale, disheveled, and breathless.

Oh, fool! You have not gone!

THE DUKE

You! But they told me—Could I go?

THE COUNTESS

Of course!

THE DUKE

But a woman—

THE COUNTESS

Well, a woman's no great loss!

THE DUKE

But I—

THE COUNTESS

You ought to have abandoned me!

THE DUKE

But think—

THE COUNTESS

I'm thinking of the time you've lost!

THE DUKE

Your danger—

THE COUNTESS

Danger? What?

THE DUKE

We feared that you—

THE COUNTESS

Feared what? Was not Flambeau my fencing-master?

THE DUKE

But that man—

THE COUNTESS

Go!

THE DUKE

What did you do?

THE COUNTESS

Oh, nothing!
He drew his sword—and I drew mine!

THE DUKE

You've fought
—For me?

THE COUNTESS

"Oh, oh," he growled, "I didn't know
The Corsican's brat was such a fighter!" "No,
He didn't know it himself till now," said I.
But my voice—

THE DUKE

Seeing that her hand is bleeding.

You're wounded!

THE COUNTESS

Scornfully shaking off the blood.

That? A scratch upon
My fingers—but my voice betrayed me. "It's
A woman!" he cried, and started back. "Defend
Yourself!" cried I. "Absurd," said he "—a woman!"
"This woman's a Napoleon! Defend
Yourself!" I lunged; he parried then; we fenced;
I gave—

FLAMBEAU

The thrust and counter-point!

THE COUNTESS

Pretending to deliver the thrust.

One! Two!

FLAMBEAU

Ah, that must have surprised him, didn't it?

THE COUNTESS

He never will get over his surprise.

THE DUKE

In a low voice.

What happened to the girl?

THE COUNTESS

Aloud.

What do you care?

THE DUKE

Hush! Did she come?

THE COUNTESS

After a moment's hesitation.

Why—no! When he burst in
I was alone.

THE DUKE

She didn't come! Ah, well—
So much the better!

THE COUNTESS

But the noise alarmed
The place. People came running, shouting—if
They found me there, the plot would be discovered!
I lost my head, groped my way out somehow,
And found your saddle-horse, leaped on, and fled!
I have ridden him to death! And I can hardly—

THE DUKE

She is fainting!

THE COUNTESS

After all I've done, I hoped
At least to find that you had gone!

ONE OF THE CONSPIRATORS

Who has been watching the road.

You are
Pursued, and in another minute—

All the conspirators make a movement to run away.

THE DUKE

Wait!
Take care of the countess! Hide her in that hut!

THE COUNTESS

As they carry her half fainting to the cabin.

Go on!

THE DUKE

Is she better?

THE COUNTESS

Go! Go on! Ah, if
Your father saw you now, so womanish,
Weak, nervous, hesitating, he would—shrug
His epaulettes!

THE DUKE

Turning to flee.

Farewell!

FLAMBEAU

Turning and seeing Sedlinsky and the police, who come up running.

We're caught!

THE COUNTESS

Too late!

SEDLINSKY

Going toward her.

Too late, your highness.

THE COUNTESS

Furiously, to the duke.

Dreamer! Coward! Fool!

SEDLINSKY

Turning to see whom the countess is addressing, in astonishment.

Your highness—

Turning back to the countess.

Er, your high—

Turning back to the duke.

Your high—

FLAMBEAU

Aha!
That bothers him!

SEDLINSKY

Beginning to understand.

Well!

FLAMBEAU

You have supped, monsieur;
You're seeing double.

SEDLINSKY

Well, well!

To Prokesch.

Sir, you must
Go back.

FLAMBEAU

We won't be crowned today in Paris.

SEDLINSKY

Indicating the attaché to two policemen.

Conduct this gentleman back.—Sir, you in this
Affair? Your government shall hear of it.

THE DUKE

I give my word he was not in the plot—

THE ATTACHÉ

I beg your pardon; if it means arrest,
I'm in it.

THE DUKE

Well, good-bye, then.

Scornfully to Sedlinsky.

Constable,
Come do your duty.

SEDLINSKY

To two other men, indicating the countess.

You, conduct the prince
—*That* prince—to her home.

They start to lay hands on her roughly.

THE DUKE

In a voice which stops them.

With the respect you owe
To me!

THE COUNTESS

The tone of a commander! Ah,
Unhappy child, you might have been a king!

She goes out, followed by two policemen.

SEDLINSKY

For the rest—oh, close your eyes, and let them take
The hint!

The conspirators whisper.

A CONSPIRATOR

I think—

ANOTHER CONSPIRATOR

Shaking his head gravely.

In the party's interest—

A THIRD CONSPIRATOR

We'd better run!

The group grows smaller at once. The rest go out with less precipitance. D'Otranto and Marmont go arm in arm, talking with large, impressive gestures. One hears:

And later—bide our time—
The proper moment—

And there are none left.

FLAMBEAU

To Sedlinsky.

Now, open your eyes!
There's one man left!

THE DUKE

Oh, save yourself—for me!

FLAMBEAU

For you?

After a moment's hesitation he turns to go. But one of the policemen whispers something to Sedlinsky.

SEDLINSKY

Halt!

The police head Flambeau off. Ten pistols are levelled at him.

That's the man.

THE POLICEMAN

Perhaps it is.

He takes a paper from his pocket and gives it to Sedlinsky, saying.

Wanted at Paris—

SEDLINSKY

Running over the paper by the light of a lantern the policeman holds.

How do they describe him?
Nose ordinary—forehead ordinary—
Eyes ordinary—

FLAMBEAU

Extraordinary!

SEDLINSKY

How
Can we recognize him?

Pretending to read on.

Ah, two bullets—in
The back.

FLAMBEAU

With a start of rage.

Ah-h-h, that's a lie!

SEDLINSKY

Smiling.

I know it is.

FLAMBEAU

Seeing that he has betrayed himself.

I'm caught. All right. A bit of luxury!
We'll wave the sword before we give it up.

THE DUKE

You'll give him up?

SEDLINSKY

Yes.

THE DUKE

Like a criminal?
You have no right.

SEDLINSKY

We'll take it.

THE DUKE

God!

FLAMBEAU

Flambeau,
That way you had of never being punished,
It got to be a habit—very bad.

SEDLINSKY

Consulting the description.

He is not decorated, too, and has
No right to that red ribbon. Take it off!

FLAMBEAU

Oh, take it. I don't care.

With another geranium, he redecorates his overcoat.

There's plenty more
Growing—all *I* want.

SEDLINSKY

Take his coat off!

They do so. Flambeau appears in his French grenadier's uniform.

What!

FLAMBEAU

Think this is more becoming?

THE DUKE

But what will
They do to you?

FLAMBEAU

What did they do to Ney?

THE DUKE

Oh, no! Impossible!

FLAMBEAU

A firing-squad,
And—bang!

THE DUKE

Oh!

FLAMBEAU

I have always laughed at bullets,
But—French ones! Well, we haven't come to that!

THE DUKE

Beseechingly to Sedlinsky.

You will not give him up!

SEDLINSKY

Without reprieve.

FLAMBEAU

Well, so long, Séraphin! Farewell, Flambeau!

Without being seen, he has opened his knife. He seems to fold his arms quietly on his breast; his right hand disappears beneath his left elbow; his arms shake a little, as he presses home; and he stands quietly, with arms crossed.

SEDLINSKY

Come on!

The policeman pushes Flambeau.

THE DUKE

He's falling!

THE POLICEMAN

Oh, he's playing sick!

FLAMBEAU

Sending the policeman's hat twenty yards with a back-hand stroke.

Take off that stove-pipe! Can't you hear? The duke
Is speaking to you!

The gesture uncovers his bosom; there is a spot of red over his heart.

THE DUKE

Flambeau! You have killed
Yourself!

FLAMBEAU

Oh, no, sire; I have put my Legion
Of Honor on again!

THE DUKE

Springing between him and the police, who are about to pick him up.

Don't let a man
Of you lay hands on him! That noble soldier
Touched by a base gendarme! Never! I will
Not have it. Leave us. Go away!

FLAMBEAU

Faintly.

Your highness—

SEDLINSKY

Pointing to the old peasant, who is coming tenderly toward Flambeau.

Here, take that fellow away!

THE DUKE

I will await
My regiment, here. It's nearly dawn. The colors
Shall dip, the band shall play an air that's fit
For the funeral of a soldier.—It shall be
The soldiers who shall bear you home!

SEDLINSKY

Aside to a policeman.

Where are
The horses?

THE POLICEMAN

They've been taken back.

SEDLINSKY

Then leave
Him. He cannot escape.

Aloud, with a pretense of kindness.

We may allow
His highness—

THE DUKE

Violently.

Go away!

SEDLINSKY

I understand
Your feeling—

THE DUKE

With a threatening gesture.

Must I drive you?

SEDLINSKY

Sir, this—

THE DUKE

Showing the field of Wagram.

Here
I am in my own house!

Sedlinsky and his men withdraw.

FLAMBEAU

Raising himself on his elbow.

You know, somehow
It's funny it should be on this field, where
I risked my life for your father, that I give
It for his son today!

THE DUKE

Kneeling by him.

No, not for me!
I am not worth it! Not for me! You're dying
For him!

FLAMBEAU

For him?

THE DUKE

Of course, for him.—This field
Is Wagram!

Whispering.

Wagram!

FLAMBEAU

Opening his eyes vaguely.

Wagram?

THE DUKE

Don't you see it?
Don't you remember it? The plain, the hill,
The pointed belfry? Do you feel the earth

Trembling beneath you? It's the battlefield!
Do you hear the battle?

FLAMBEAU

The battle!

THE DUKE

Do you hear
The mingled thunders?

FLAMBEAU

Yes—yes—is it true?
I am dying at Wagram?

THE DUKE

Do you see that horse
Dragging his rider on the ground?

He rises.

We are
At Wagram, at a crucial moment. There,
Davoust is trying to turn Neusiedel.
The Emperor is watching through his spyglass.
You have been wounded by a bayonet.
I have brought you to this mound, and I will—

FLAMBEAU

Have
The light-horse charged?

THE DUKE

There! All that blue and white
—The blue of coats, the white of shoulder-belts—
Those are the riflemen!

FLAMBEAU

Ah? General Reille.

THE DUKE

But the Emperor ought to send out Oudinot!
His left is being driven back!

FLAMBEAU

Winking.

The fox!

THE DUKE

They are fighting! They are fighting! There's Macdonald,
And there's Masséna, wounded, in a carriage!

FLAMBEAU

If the archduke extends his right, he's lost!

THE DUKE

We are winning!

FLAMBEAU

Where?

THE DUKE

The Prince of Auersperg
Is captured by our Polish lancers!

FLAMBEAU

And
The Emperor? What is he doing?

THE DUKE

He
Is watching.

FLAMBEAU

Has the Little Corporal
Caught the archduke in his trap?

THE DUKE

That cloud of dust
Is Nansouty!

FLAMBEAU

Has the archduke advanced
His wing?

THE DUKE

And there, half-hidden in the smoke,
Is Lauriston!

FLAMBEAU

And the archduke? What is
The archduke doing? Can you see?

THE DUKE

The archduke
Advances on his right!

FLAMBEAU

He's caught; He's caught!

THE DUKE

A hundred muskets at the gallop!

FLAMBEAU

Struggling.

I
Am dying—I am stifling—Water!—And
—What is—the Emperor—doing?

THE DUKE

He is closing
His spyglass—

FLAMBEAU

Peacefully closing his eyes.

Victory.

Silence.

THE DUKE

Flambeau!

Silence. The death-rattle begins in Flambeau's throat. The duke looks around, frightened, and sees himself alone with the dying man in that immense plain. He shivers and draws back a little.

That soldier
Lying upon the ground there, frightens me!
But why? It's nothing strange—a grenadier
Of France, asleep upon this field;—he's not
The first!

Leaning over Flambeau.

Yes, victory! They cheer, and wave
Their shakos.

FLAMBEAU

Through his death-rattle.

Water!

VOICES IN THE WIND

Water!—Water!

THE DUKE

Oh!

What are those echoes?

A VOICE

Very distant.

Water!

THE DUKE

Wiping the sweat from his forehead.

God!

FLAMBEAU

In a harsh voice.

I am dying!

VOICES

From all sides.

I am dying.—I am dying.

THE DUKE

His last cry

Is echoed—

A VOICE

I am dying—

THE DUKE

—Everywhere!
Ah, now I understand! His dying cry
Came to this plain that knows such cries by heart
Like the first line of an old song, and when
The man's voice stops, the plain goes on!

THE PLAIN

In the distance.

Ah!—Ah!

THE DUKE

I understand! Death-rattle, groan, and cry
Are Wagram's memories, murmured aloud!

THE PLAIN

Ah-h-h-h!

THE DUKE

He does not move.—Oh, let me get
Away! He really seems to have fallen in
The battle!

Without taking his eyes from the dead man, he draws back, murmuring.

It must be like that—that coat
—That blood—

Suddenly he starts to run, but stops as if he saw another dead soldier before him.

Another!

He turns in another direction, and recoils again.

And another, there!

He stops a third time.

And there!

Looking round.

Everywhere stretch the same blue shapes.
They are dying—

Drawing back as before a mounting wave, he has taken refuge on a little mound from which he can see the whole plain.

they are dying so for leagues!

THE WHOLE PLAIN

I am dying—I am dying—I am dying.

THE DUKE

We think the ground will keep our secrets, but
The plain can tell its memories, and tonight
The very earth cries out!

THE EARTH

Heavily.

Ah-h! Ah-h!

A murmur of indistinct voices grows louder and comes nearer through the grass, which is stirred by some unearthly breath.

THE DUKE

Trembling with the chill of fever.

What are
They whispering, creeping through the grass?

A VOICE

In the tall grass.

My arm
Is hanging helpless!

ANOTHER VOICE

Oh, my leg is dead!

ANOTHER VOICE

My forehead's bleeding!

ANOTHER VOICE

I can't breathe beneath
The heap of bodies!

THE DUKE

It's the battlefield!
I wished it so, and so it is!

The voices speak through a growing mutter of groans and sobs.

A VOICE

Some water
Upon my wounds!

ANOTHER VOICE

Tell me what I have broken!

ANOTHER VOICE

Don't let me die in the ditch here!

THE DUKE

All the plain
Is waving with a forest of arms—

He takes a step.

and I
Am treading on a field of uniforms.

A VOICE

Help me!

THE DUKE

I've slipped upon a sword-belt!

He tries to go, seeming to stride over something at every step.

A VOICE

Comrade,
Give me your hands!

ANOTHER VOICE

I've no hands left!

THE DUKE

Where shall
I turn?

A VOICE

Very near.

Water!

A CRY AT A DISTANCE

The crows!

THE DUKE

Oh, horrible!
Oh, the rows of wooden soldiers on my table!

THE DARKNESS, THE WIND, THE BUSHES

Oh . . . !

THE DUKE

Crippled, dying ghosts, your feverish eyes
Terrify me!—But you are glorious,
Your France is proud of your heroic names!
What is your name?

A VOICE

Jean.

THE DUKE

Yours?

A VOICE

Paul.

THE DUKE

Yours?

A VOICE

Pierre.

THE DUKE

And yours?

A VOICE

Jean.

THE DUKE

Yours?

A VOICE

Paul.

THE DUKE

Yours, whose bare feet bleed?

A VOICE

Pierre.

THE DUKE

Poor unknown names! Inglorious names
Of the men who forge a nation's glory!

DYING VOICES

Put
My head upon my knapsack!—Water!

THE BATTLEFIELD

In a sigh made of ten thousand sighs.

Ah!

THE VOICES

The horses have gone over me!—I am dying!
—I am dying!—Help!

A CRY IN THE DISTANCE

The crows!

A VOICE

My God, my God,
I am in Thy hands!

CRIES IN THE DISTANCE

The crows! The crows!

THE DUKE

Oh, God,
Where are the eagles?

VOICES IN THE WIND

Water!—None! The brook
Is running blood!—Then give me that! I thirst!

CRIES FROM ALL DIRECTIONS

I am wounded!—Dying!—Oh!

AN OLD AND HOARSE VOICE

Christ!

A YOUNG VOICE

Mother!

THE DUKE

Standing frozen.

Oh!

A GROAN UPON THE ROAD

For pity's sake, come shoot me through the head!

THE DUKE

I understand now why I wake at night!—

A SIGH IN THE GRASS

Ah! Ah! What butchers those light-horsemen are!

THE DUKE

And why my coughing leaves me torn and sweating!

A CRY AMONG THE BUSHES

I cannot move my leg! Oh, tear it off!

THE DUKE

I know the blood that rises in my throat!

THE WHOLE PLAIN

Ah!—Ah!

In the pallid shadows before the dawn, under the changing light, and seen against the background of a distant storm, everything takes on a terrifying shape; plumes wave in the grain, the mound bristles with fantastic busbies, and a gust of wind lends a semblance of life to the bushes.

THE DUKE

And all these arms I see, these wrists
Without their hands, and hands without their fingers!
O field of monstrous grain a light wind seems

To bend toward me as if to curse me—

He falls, stretching out pleading hands.

Mercy!
Mercy, old guardsman, holding out your hands
All shriveled in their bloody gauntlets! Mercy,
Poor rifleman, lifting your white, drawn face!
Don't look at me like that, with those glazed eyes!
—Why are you crawling toward me silently?
God, you are going to speak to me, to shout
Some curse! Why do you catch your breath? Why open
Your pallid mouths? What is it? What have you
To cry to me?

ALL THE VOICES

Long live the Emperor!

THE DUKE

Yes, they forgive him, for his glory's sake!

Quietly and sadly to the plain.

I thank you.

Rising.

And I understand. I am
The sacrifice. My father owed this debt,
And I have paid it full. I understand.
It was for this that all my life I have grown
So thin and pale, that now I might be found
White and unspotted for the altar. I
Am the victim. I must give my sufferings, and
Myself. Here, where the plain breathes forth its mists
Like incense, here between the battlefield
And heaven, I must rise with all my soul
And all my strength, feeling the plain rise up
Beneath me, offering me to appease the heaven
That bends down and accepts the sacrifice.

That is my destiny, and my reward
To know that now this battlefield may bear,
With no regrets, its name of victory.

He stands upright on the mound, tiny in that immense plain, and stretches out his arms, forming a cross against the sky.

Yes, take me, take me, Wagram! Offer me,
A ransom for the past, a son who gives
Himself in payment for those many sons,
Raise me to heaven, all white in thy red hands!
It must be so, I know, I feel, I wish:
My hair is lifted by the breath of Wagram;
My soul is stirred by whispers from the field;
My uniform is white—the sacred host!

He whispers.

Father! your sufferings free you from reproach
—Then let me add my prison's name to yours,
Schoenbrunn to Saint Helena! Hush!

He closes his eyes a moment.

It's done!

Dawn begins to break. He goes on more strongly.

But when the eaglet gives himself to die,
Crucified, like an owl upon a barn,
And singing, like a swan, then he may spread
His wings and soar magnificent, and drive
The crows away, and bring the eagles back!
O field, your wrongs are righted! No more ghosts
Shall crawl among your bushes horribly.
O plain, I have cleansed your air and washed your waters!
Your echoes need not wake to any sound
But battle-cries and shouts of triumph!

Everything turns golden. The wind sings.

Yes,

I have deserved to hear the groaning turn
To trumpeting,

Trumpets sound very far away. The voices that were groaning, now shout commands and battle-cries.

to see the shapes who dragged
Themselves through the stubble, rise now in a charge
Of spirits!

The blowing bushes seem to gallop. The noise of horses is heard.

THE VOICES IN THE DISTANCE

Forward!

THE DUKE

Now the splendid side!
The dust the passing charge throws in one's eyes!

THE VOICES

Charge!

Invisible drums beat the charge.

THE DUKE

And the laughter of the fierce Hussars!

THE VOICES

In Homeric laughter.

Ha! Ha!

THE DUKE

O goddess I have just set free,
O Victory, with all your hundred mouths,
Sing in the distance! Sing!

THE VOICES

Singing a distant Marseillaise.

March on! March on!

THE DUKE

The splendor of it!

The sun appears. The clouds are full of purple and gold, making the very sky appear like an army of the empire.

God! to fight in all
This mirrored blaze on earth and in the sky!

THE VOICES

Fire!—Half-columns, by your right, advance.

THE DUKE

To fight in a battle under your command,
My father!

Through the dying noise of the battle is heard, very distant between two rolls of drums, a metallic and haughty voice.

THE VOICE

Officers and soldiers!

THE DUKE

Wildly, drawing his sabre.

Yes,
I am fighting! Bayonets are fixed! The flags
Are flapping! Men are laughing, shouting, fighting—

While the trumpets of the vision have been dying away at the left, suddenly real trumpets are blown at the right, and, with a contrast sharp as a reveille to the furious French airs that are following the last shadows, a soft march of Schubert's, dancing and Austrian, comes in with the rose of morning. The duke turns, trembling.

Who are these men in white? The Austrians!
Their infantry! Come! Forward! Follow me!
Ride through them! Cut them down!

With raised sabre, he rushes upon the first ranks of an Austrian regiment that appears upon the road.

AN OFFICER

Throwing himself upon him and stopping him.

Your highness, what
Are you doing? This is your own regiment!

THE DUKE

With a terrible cry.

What? My—?

He looks around. The sun has risen; everything has resumed its natural appearance. Of all the dead men only Flambeau is left. The duke is in the middle of a great, quiet plain. White-uniformed soldiers are marching in. He sees his destiny and accepts it; the arm raised to strike comes down, hand to thigh, the drawn sabre takes the regulation position, and the duke, stiff as an automaton, in a mechanical voice, a voice that is only the voice of an Austrian colonel, commands.

Regiment, halt! Present arms!

The commands are repeated by the officers, and the curtain falls as the drill begins.

ACT VI

FOLDED WINGS

Some time later, at Schoenbrunn. The Duke of Reichstadt's bedchamber, sombre and sumptuous.

At the back, the high black and gold door that opens into the little Porcelain Cabinet. At the right, a window. At the left, a tapestry which disguises a little door.

The room is furnished as it is today: black and gold armchairs, screen, prie-dieu, tables and consoles.

The feverish disorder of a sick-room: books and bottles, cups and fruit, and everywhere, on all the furniture, huge bunches of violets.

Downstage, toward the left, a narrow camp bed. Beside it, in the middle of a low table loaded like everything else with medicines and flowers, a small bronze bust of Napoleon I.

At the rise of the curtain the duke, horribly wasted, is sitting shivering on the edge of his bed. His haggard face is sunk in the many folds of his crumpled cambric neckcloth; his light hair, which he is too ill to have cut, falls in long disordered locks. He is wrapped in a great military cloak, which he uses for a dressing-gown; under this he is in shirt and drawers, his fragile body lost in his flowing linen, his thin hands almost hidden in his ruffled sleeves. He is staring straight before him.

The doctor and General Hartmann, an old soldier detailed for service on the duke, are standing in a corner of the room, talking in undertones.

Mysteriously the door at the back opens a little, letting a trembling yellow light filter in. The archduchess slips in, glances back as if to make sure that something is ready, and quickly closes the door without a sound. She is very pale among her laces.

After exchanging a few whispered words with the two men, who look at the duke and shake their heads, she goes quietly to him and gently takes his hand.

He starts, and recognizes her with surprise.

THE DUKE

You? But I thought that you were ill?

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Oh, yes,
I have been ill, as you have, but I'm better.
I've gotten up. And how are you now?

THE DUKE

Worse,
Since you get up to come and see me.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

You
Are joking! Is your patient reasonable?

THE DOCTOR

He drinks his milk now very nicely.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Good!
Oh, that is darling! Oh, it's—

THE DUKE

Oh, it's hard,
—When one's whole soul was set on fire with dreams
Of history's highest praises to be won—
To be praised for the way one drinks his milk!

Burying his face in a bunch of violets.

O globe of coolness laid upon my fever,
Flowers that bathe my burning face with dew!

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Every one brings them to you?

THE DUKE

Yes.—Already.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Dear, hush!

She goes on in some embarrassment.

In thankfulness to God for saving
Us both—for both of us are getting well—
This morning I'm to take Communion.

A little disconcerted by the duke's steady gaze.

And
I think it would be very nice if both—
Why not make your communion with me, Franz?

THE DUKE

After a searching look into her eyes.

That's why you are so pious and so charming.
It is the end.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

There! I was sure of it!
What of the etiquette?

THE DUKE

The etiquette?

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Of course! For when an Austrian prince is ill,
Is—worse, I mean,—it cannot be kept from him,
All the Imperial Family must be present
When he receives the—

THE DUKE

The?

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Not that sad word!

THE DUKE

It's true, we are alone.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

I've had an altar
Prepared, there, in the Porcelain Cabinet;
And not the least archduke, the least archduchess!
The bishop will say mass for us alone.
You see it only means taking communion;
This sacrament is not—

THE DUKE

The last? That's true.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

You see!

Offering her arm.

Well, will you come?

He rises dizzily. A bell rings.

There! They're beginning
The mass!

Leaning on her, he goes toward the door. The doctor and General Hartmann open it.

THE DUKE

It's true, we would have needed that
Illustrious company.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

And we shall have
Only the bishop and the acolyte.

THE DUKE

Observing the smiles of the two men.

It isn't for today, at least.

They go out. The men's smiles vanish. General Hartmann opens the little door in the tapestry, and shows in all the Imperial Family.

GENERAL HARTMANN

In an undertone.

Come in.

With his finger on his lips, he motions them to their places. The princes and princesses, taking infinite pains not to be heard, station themselves in several rows facing the closed door behind which from time to time a bell rings. Marie-Louise is in the front row. There are archdukes who are very old and archdukes who are babies; and young archdukes with the same fair hair as the duke's. Uniforms gleam in the shadowy doorway. Metternich, in full court dress, takes his place in the last row of the Imperial Family. When they are all motionless, General Hartmann begins again, in a low voice.

When, with eyes closed and soul raised up to heaven,
The duke is kneeling to receive the host,—

A PRINCESS

To her children.

Hush!

GENERAL HARTMANN

In that moment when there's nothing that
Can make a Christian turn his head, I'll softly
Open the door, and dimly, for a moment,
Your highnesses will see his golden head.
Then swiftly, silently, I'll close the door,
And then the duke will raise his head again,
With no suspicion that, according to
The immemorial usage, he has received,
Before the whole court, the viaticum.

Prokesch comes in, at the left, bringing in two women: the Countess Camerata and Thérèse.

METTERNICH

To the newcomers.

Silence.

PROKESCH

I've been allowed to place you here,
Behind the Imperial Family, and thus,
Above the bent heads of these princes, on
Whose hair the Fates have sprinkled silver, of
Children whose mothers join their hands for them,
You may behold the duke for the last time.

THÉRÈSE

Oh, thank you, thank you!

MARIE-LOUISE

Oh, let no one stir
When the door opens!

A PRINCESS

There's the bell!

ANOTHER PRINCESS

It is
The Elevation.

The women kneel.

GENERAL HARTMANN

Quietly!

THE COUNTESS

Who has not knelt, seeing Metternich standing beside her with bowed head.

Well, Prince
Von Metternich, and have you no regrets?

METTERNICH

Turning and looking proudly at her.

No. I have done my duty. It may be
That I have suffered in the doing of it.

But I've obeyed the country and the master
And the old order, madam, that I serve.

THE COUNTESS

You regret nothing?

METTERNICH

After a moment's pause.

Nothing.

The bell rings again.

Hark! The Agnus Dei.

MARIE-LOUISE

To the general.

Take care that the door doesn't creak!

METTERNICH

I regret nothing—but he was a very
Great prince. And when I kneel, today and here,

He kneels.

It is not only to the Lamb of God.

GENERAL HARTMANN

Looking through a crack of the door.

The bishop takes the great ciborium
—Uncovers it!

ALL

Feeling the moment approach.

Oh!

GENERAL HARTMANN

Perfect silence; I
Am going to open—

ALL

Oh—!

THE GENERAL

I open!

He noiselessly opens the double door, and reveals the gay little morning-room where everything is made of porcelain, the blue and white walls, high lights of chinaware, bunches of violets, choristers and acolytes, a mist of incense, tender golden candle-light, the beauty and richness of the altar—and, with their back toward the watchers, she supporting him with an arm around his shoulders, the archduchess and the duke kneeling, and the bishop coming toward them with the host already trembling on the edge of the ciborium. A moment of silence and deep emotion. Every one is kneeling, holding back the tears. Thérèse slowly rises to look above the bent heads, looks and sees.

THÉRÈSE

Bursting into uncontrollable sobs.

Oh;
To see him now, like this! Him! Him!

A frightened movement. The general quickly closes the door. Everyone rises.

THE GENERAL

Go back!
The duke heard! Quick! Go back!

All hurry toward the little door, but the doors of the Porcelain Cabinet open. The duke appears in the doorway.

THE DUKE

After a long look of comprehension.

Ah?—Very well.

Coming down, with sudden majesty.

Let me assure, first, of my gratitude
The woman's heart that, breaking, broke the silence.

Let her who wept feel no remorse for it:
They had no right to rob me of my death.
But leave me now, my Austrian family!
"My son is born a prince of France! Let him
Remember that until his death." This is
The hour: I remember it.

As the princes go out.

Farewell.
—Whose was the heart that broke?

THÉRÈSE

Who has remained humbly on her knees in a corner.

It was my heart.

THE DUKE

Tenderly.

You are not very reasonable. Once,
Over a book, you wept to see me live
An Austrian, with flowers in my coat;
And now you weep to see me die of it.

The archduchess and the countess support him to an armchair.
Thérèse comes forward timidly.

THÉRÈSE

The rendezvous—

THE DUKE

Yes?

THÉRÈSE

I was there.

THE DUKE

Were you?
Poor soul!

THÉRÈSE

Yes.

THE DUKE

Why?

THÉRÈSE

Because I love you.

THE DUKE

To the countess.

Madam,
You kept this from me, that she came there. Why?

THE COUNTESS

Because I love you.

THE DUKE

Who, in the palace here,
Brought you both in to see me?

The countess and Thérèse look at the archduchess.

You?

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Myself.

THE DUKE

But why are you so kind?

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Because I love you.

THE DUKE

Women have loved me as they love a child.

They make a gesture of protest.

Yes, yes!

To Thérèse.

The child they pity,

To the archduchess.

that they spoil,

To the countess.

That they protect. And their maternal fingers
Have always sought, upon the prince's forehead,
The golden love-locks of the Lawrence portrait!

THE COUNTESS

No, no! We know your soul! We know its struggles!

THE DUKE

And history too never will remember
The prince so many feverish longings burned,
But it will see the wagon drawn by goats,
The rosy, grave, fair child among his laces,
Holding the globe like a big toy-balloon!

MARIE-LOUISE

Speak to me! I am here. Give me one word
To lighten my remorse. I was too small
For your too lofty dreams—was that my fault?
I'm nothing but a twittering bird, I know!
The little bell that's always tinkling in
My head, is silent now for the first time.
Franz, you might think of me a little now.
My son, forgive me!

THE DUKE

O my God, give me
The words, the deep and tender words, in which

A son may dare offer forgiveness to
His mother!

A footman comes in and goes toward Marie-Louise, who sees him and understands.

MARIE-LOUISE

Wiping her eyes.

Franz, the cradle that you wanted
Last night—

THE FOOTMAN

It's here.

The duke signs him to bring it in. Then, seeing Metternich, he rises.

THE DUKE

Ah, my lord chancellor,
I die too soon for you; then weep for me.

METTERNICH

But, prince—

THE DUKE

I was your strength; my death disarms you.
Europe, which never dared say No to you
When you were he who could let go the Eaglet,
Listening tomorrow, will take heart, and say,
"I do not hear him moving in his cage."

METTERNICH

Highness—

The footmen bring in the great scarlet cradle of the King of Rome.

THE DUKE

The cradle Paris gave to me!
My splendid cradle that Prudhon designed!
I've slept between its posts of mother of pearl,
A child whose christening was a coronation!

Set the great cradle by this small camp bed,
Where once my father slept, in this room, when
Victory fanned his slumbers with her wings.
Nearer,—until the bed-clothes brush the laces.
See how my cradle and my death-bed touch!
My life is in that narrow space between.

THÉRÈSE

Sobbing on the countess' shoulder.

Oh—

THE DUKE

In that space, so narrow and so dark,
Fate has not dropped the smallest shred of glory!
Lay me upon the cot.

The doctor and Prokesch, assisted by the countess, support him to the bed.

PROKESCH

How pale he grows!

The countess draws a cordon of the Legion of Honor from her bosom, and as she settles the duke among his cushions, she slips it around him. Suddenly he sees it, smiles, and kisses the cross.

THE DUKE

Ah, I was greater in that cradle than
Upon this bed. There women rocked me—yes,
I had three nurses, and they sang to me
Their slumber-songs—old songs—and wonderful,
The old sweet lullabies of my old nurse!
Now, who'll sing me to sleep with lullabies?

MARIE-LOUISE

Kneeling by the bed.

Who but your mother, Franz, should sing to you?

THE DUKE

Do you know any songs of France?

MARIE-LOUISE

I? No.

THE DUKE

To Thérèse.

Do you?

THÉRÈSE

Perhaps.

THE DUKE

Oh, sing, sing soft *Il pleut*
Bergère,

She hums the air.

or sing *Nous n'irons plus au bois,*

She hums again.

And *Sur le pont d'Avignon*—to send me
Softly to slumber in the people's soul.

She murmurs the old round, very softly.

And there was one more—yes—one more I loved;
Oh, that's the one I want the most of all.

He rises in bed feverishly, and sings.

"There was a little man,
He went all dressed in gray—!"

He motions toward the bust of the Emperor, and falls back.

THÉRÈSE

Fall, prisoner, as fell the conqueror.

THE COUNTESS

A crystal broken by a brazen echo.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

A harp's sweet note heard after martial music.

THÉRÈSE

A lily falling silently on laurels.

THE DOCTOR

The duke is weak. You must withdraw.

THÉRÈSE

Farewell,
François!

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Farewell, Franz!

THE COUNTESS

Farewell, Bonaparte!

MARIE-LOUISE

His head grows heavier against my shoulder.

THE ARCHDUCHESS

Kneeling at the door.

Duke of Reichstadt!

THE COUNTESS

Kneeling.

King of Rome!

THÉRÈSE

Kneeling.

Poor child!

THE DUKE

In delirium.

Horses! Horses!

THE BISHOP

Entering with acolytes carrying lighted candles.

Let us pray for him.

THE DUKE

Horses! Horses to go and meet my father!

Tears run down his cheeks. Marie-Louise tries to dry them, but he pushes her away.

MARIE-LOUISE

But I am here to dry your tears, my son.

THE DUKE

No! Let the Victories, my sisters, come!
I feel them, feel the mad and glorious beings
Draw near to bathe their halos in my tears.

MARIE-LOUISE

What are you saying?

THE DUKE

Saying? I said nothing.

Laying a finger on his lip.

A secret 'twixt my father and myself.

Taking hold of the lace of the cradle.

Let me wrap myself in this lace to draw
That last breath that shall set all Europe free!
Too many people wish my death; I'm dying
Of being poisoned in too many hearts.

He closes his eyes a moment.

My funeral will be ugly. Archers of
The Guard; footmen with torches at the gates.
The capuchins will tell their wooden beads;
And then they'll lay me in their chapel—and then—

He turns fearfully pale and bites his lips.

MARIE-LOUISE

What is your trouble, dear?

THE DUKE

Unbearable;
The court will go in mourning for six weeks.

THE COUNTESS

Instead of coverings, he draws the lace
Of the cradle, see, about him.

THE DUKE

Gasping.

Yes—it will
Be very ugly—yes—but as I die
I must remember—how they christen better
In Paris than they bury in Vienna.
—General Hartmann!

GENERAL HARTMANN

Coming forward.

Prince.

THE DUKE

Rocking the cradle.

I'll wait for death
Rocking the past to sleep.

Taking a book from under his pillow.

Here, general.
—The past—I rock the past—and it's as if
The Duke of Reichstadt rocked the King of Rome.
—General, do you see the place I marked?

GENERAL HARTMANN

Yes.

THE DUKE

Good. Then while I'm dying, read aloud.

MARIE-LOUISE

No, no, my child, my child, you must not die!

THE DUKE

Propping himself up on his pillows.

You may begin to read.

GENERAL HARTMANN

Standing at the foot of the bed and reading.

"Toward seven o'clock
The Imperial Guard appear, forming the head
Of the procession."

MARIE-LOUISE

Realizing what is being read, falls on her knees weeping.

Franz!

GENERAL HARTMANN

"The mighty crowd,
Where women and men too are sobbing, cry
With a great shout: 'Long live the King of Rome!' "

MARIE-LOUISE

Franz!

GENERAL HARTMANN

"Salvos of artillery are fired.
The cardinal receives their majesties.
The great procession enters, following
The ancient order of precedence; first
Pursuivants, heralds, and the King-at-Arms;
The pages; then the Emperor's aides-de-camp,
The—"

He stops, seeing that the duke has closed his eyes.

THE DUKE

Opening his eyes.

The—?

GENERAL HARTMANN

"The chamberlains and majordomos;
Ministers, Masters of the Horse—"

THE DUKE

Please read!

GENERAL HARTMANN

"The standard-bearers with the golden eagles;
Then the great officers of state; the Princess
Aldobrandini holds the chrisom-cloth,
The Countesses de Beauveau and Vilain
Quatorze bring in the salt-cellar and ewer;—"

THE DUKE

Please go on reading. Mother, lift me up.

GENERAL HARTMANN

"The Grand Duke, who stood for the Emperor
Of Austria as godfather, walked next
The little king; then Queen Hortense; beside her
Came Her Imperial Highness the godmother.
At last, borne by Madame de Montesquiou,
The King of Rome appeared. His Majesty,
Whose beauty was admired by all the throng,
Wore a great silver mantle faced with ermine,
Whose train the Duc de Valmy bore. Then came
The princes—"

THE DUKE

Pass the princes.

GENERAL HARTMANN

Skipping a page.

"Then the kings—"

THE DUKE

And pass the kings. Turn over to the end
Of the ceremony.

GENERAL HARTMANN

Skipping several pages.

"Then—"

THE DUKE

I do not hear.

Read louder.

THE DOCTOR

To Prokesch.

It is the death-agony.

GENERAL HARTMANN

In a ringing voice.

"Then, when the herald in the choir had cried
Three times 'Long live the King of Rome,' before
They gave the imperial child back to his nurse,
The Emperor took it from the—"

He hesitates, looking at Marie-Louise.

THE DUKE

Laying his hand with infinite nobility upon the head of Marie-Louise, who is kneeling by the bed.

From the Empress.

At this word which pardons and crowns her again, the mother bursts out sobbing.

GENERAL HARTMANN

"And raised him for the people to acclaim.
The deep—"

THE DUKE

His head falling back.

Mama!

MARIE-LOUISE

Throwing herself across his body.

François!

THE DUKE

Opening his eyes.

Napoleon.

GENERAL HARTMANN

"The deep *Te Deum* filled the sanctuary.
That night, throughout the whole of France, with the
Same pomp and the same joy—"

THE DOCTOR

Touching him on the arm.

Dead.

A pause. The general closes the book.

METTERNICH

You will clothe him
In the white uniform of Austria.

THE END

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